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ALEXANDER  
THE GREAT



*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

THE GIRDLE OF APHRODITE  
POETS OF THE GREEK ANTH-  
OLOGY

THE LETTERS OF ALCIPHRON  
A HISTORY OF LATER LATIN  
LITERATURE. (With T. A.  
SINCLAIR)

A HISTORY OF LATER GREEK  
LITERATURE.





HEAD OF ALEXANDER

# ALEXANDER THE GREAT

BY

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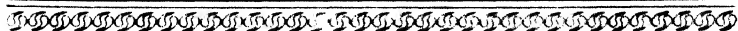


LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD.

BROADWAY HOUSE : 68-74 CARTER LANE, E.C.

1934





To  
Dr GEORGE SENTER

“ Some talk of Alexander, and some of Hercules.”



## PREFACE

THIS book is intended for the general reader who wishes to know something of the greatest man that the human race has as yet produced. I have used the chief ancient authorities for his life, Plutarch, Arrian, Curtius and Diodorus, together with the modern histories of Droysen and Adolf Holm, and the biographies by Hogarth, Wilcken, and Radet. On Alexander's campaigns in India Sir Aurel Stein and Sir Percy Sykes have given me much valuable information, and throughout I owe a special debt to the writings of W. W. Tarn in the *Cambridge Ancient History* and elsewhere.





# CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	I
I. MACEDONIANS AND GREEKS . . . . .	5
II. PHILIP OF MACEDON . . . . .	21
III. HEIR-APPARENT . . . . .	37
IV. CAPTAIN-GENERAL OF GREECE . . . . .	54
V. THE INVASION OF ASIA : FIRST PHASE . . . . .	72
VI. THE INVASION OF ASIA : SECOND PHASE . . . . .	89
VII. EGYPTIAN INTERLUDE . . . . .	105
VIII. ARBELA . . . . .	121
IX. THE TREASURE CITIES . . . . .	136
X. KING OF ASIA . . . . .	155
XI. THE IRANIAN CAMPAIGNS . . . . .	171
XII. INDIA . . . . .	189
XIII. RETURN TO THE WEST . . . . .	207
XIV. THE LAST YEAR . . . . .	224
XV. ALEXANDER'S WORK . . . . .	241
INDEX . . . . .	263



# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

## PLATES

1. HEAD OF ALEXANDER . . . . . *Frontispiece*

This enlargement comes from the figure of Alexander on the Sarcophagus of the Satraps now at Constantinople. Plutarch tells us that Lysippus moulded a similar scene in bronze, and if the relief on the Sarcophagus is a replica of his work, as is possible, we have here a portrait of Alexander by the only hand whom he thought worthy of depicting him.

2. ALEXANDER IN BATTLE . . . . . *facing p.* 97

This broken mosaic, found in the House of the Faun of Pompeii and now at Naples, is a copy of a picture by Philoxenus of Eretria, who lived in the fourth century B.C. The original was probably based on the picturesque narrative of Cleitarchus, and shows Alexander in much closer proximity to Darius than was ever actually the fact.

3. ALEXANDER HUNTING . . . . . *facing p.* 121

The Sarcophagus of the Satraps with its coloured figures is one of the most magnificent specimens of Hellenistic art. This relief shows Alexander at a lion hunt with Greeks and Persians, and closely resembles the bronze group which Plutarch saw at Delphi.

4. THE TOMB OF DARIUS I AT PERSEPOLIS *facing p.* 151

This illustration of the tomb of Darius I, cut in the face of the limestone rock in the mountains behind Persepolis, gives some idea of the stern grandeur of Persian art. It is one of seven tombs made for the Achæmenid kings; but the seventh, intended for Darius Codomannus, was never finished.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

### PLATES

5. THE MARRIAGE OF ALEXANDER AND ROXANA *facing p.* 185

This fresco by Sodoma (1477-1549), now in the Villa Farnesina, is based on the description given by Lucian of a picture by Aëtion, who was contemporary with Alexander. The picture was taken to Italy and was seen there by Lucian in the second century A.D.

6. THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER . . . *facing p.* 195

Many parts of the North-West frontier of India are still exactly as Alexander knew them, as wild, as barren, and as difficult of access. This view of the hills in the neighbourhood of Peshawar shows the nature of the country through which the Macedonian army forced its way.

7. THE TALOI MOUNTAINS . . . *facing p.* 215

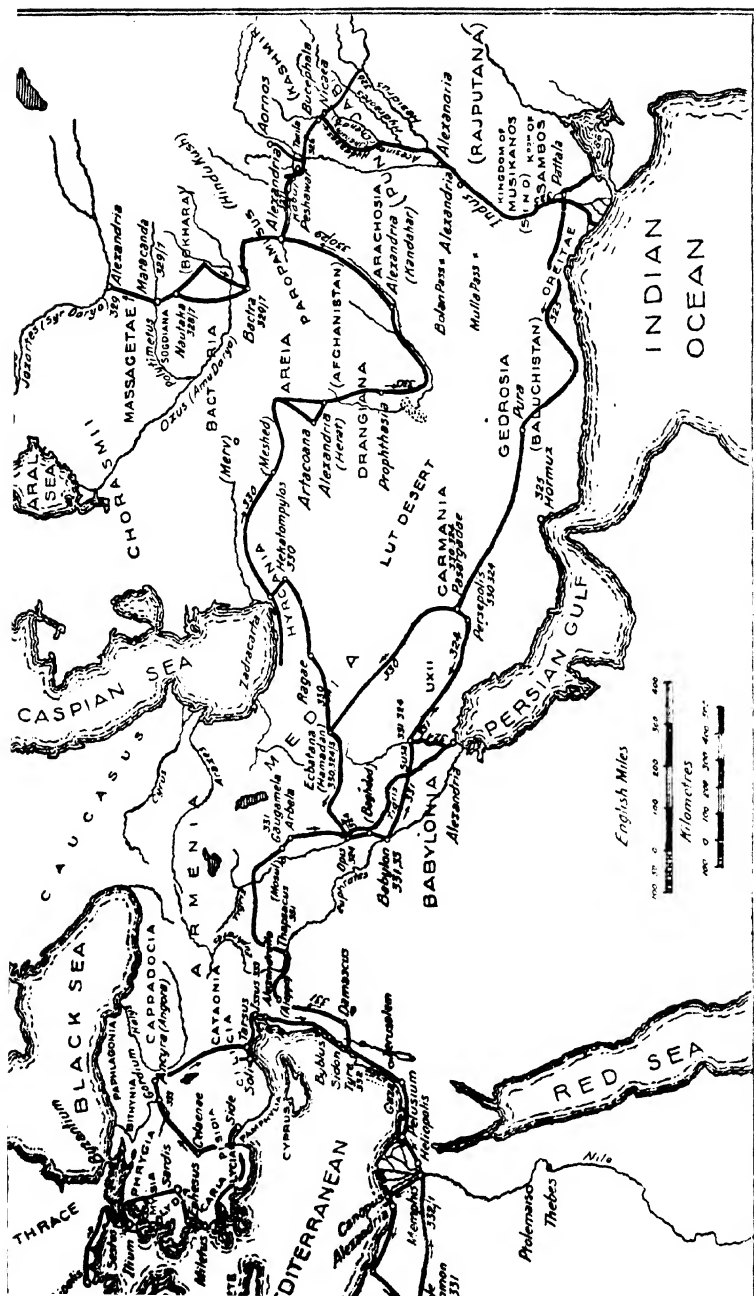
The range of mountains situated on the western side of the Hingol forms the most desolate section of Macran. They are practically impassable, and modern engineers have had the greatest difficulty in getting the telegraph line over them.

8. HEAD OF ALEXANDER . . . *facing p.* 241

For many generations the successors of Alexander were accustomed to use the effigy of the great conqueror upon their coins. This head enlarged comes from a silver tetradrachm of Lysimachus of Thrace (355-281), and shows the ram's horn of Ammon entwined in the hair as symbol of divine origin.

- MAP OF ALEXANDER'S EMPIRE . . . p. xiv

# **MAP OF ALEXANDER'S EMPIRE**



# Alexander the Great

## INTRODUCTION

**I**N the history of European civilization four names stand out from among all others: Alexander, Julius Cæsar, Charles the Great, Napoleon. All four were both builders and destroyers, clearing away the worn-out past and replacing it by a new and more spacious structure. All four were rulers of the most varied genius, turning with ease from war to politics, from literature to law-making, and from science to social reform. All four were so superior to the ordinary level of human capacity that they can hardly be judged by common standards. They were in the truest sense benefactors of mankind, and for what they did and for what they endeavoured to do the whole world still owes them a deep debt of gratitude.

But great men as were Cæsar, Charles, and Napoleon, Alexander both in his work and in his character is entitled to the first place. Cæsar threw down the effete oligarchy of his day, and laid the foundations of the Roman Principate which for three hundred years gave peace to the Mediterranean countries. Charles by establishing the Holy Roman Empire brought an end to the welter of confusion into which the world of the eighth century had fallen. Napoleon as heir of the French Revolution substituted a militant democ-



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

racy for the divine right of kings, and for good and evil was the maker of modern Europe as we know it to-day. But although the achievements of these three were wonderful in themselves and have had a profound influence on human affairs, yet the work accomplished by Alexander is of even greater importance.

Alexander was the fine flower of Greek civilization, and in spreading that civilization over all the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean he divested it of its one great weakness, its tendency to exclusiveness and a narrow parochialism, due to the sincere and ingrained belief that a Greek was a being different and superior to any other member of the human race. The effect of his conquests in widening the horizon of men's minds can only be compared to the discovery of America in the fifteenth century ; and unlike many conquerors he was not content with a military triumph, but made it his constant object to give to the peoples he subdued a share of the privileges as well as of the burdens of government. To Aristotle he owed much, but he went far beyond his master when, casting aside the distinction between Hellene and barbarian, he boldly proclaimed the universal brotherhood of man. From that declaration of faith much was to follow in coming ages, and in the countries which he conquered and organized Christianity found the soil already partly prepared.

In personal character and personal charm, Alexander stands by himself. From the weaknesses of the flesh, to which many great men have been subject, he was almost entirely immune ; there was no Cleopatra, no

## INTRODUCTION

Josephine in his life ; and the only woman whom he allowed to influence him in any way was his mother. Cæsar was bald, Charles was fat, Napoleon was undersized : but Alexander was a model of manly beauty and always in perfect physical condition. His mind was equal to his body ; for to an insatiable curiosity and desire for knowledge he added a boldness of spirit and power of imagination which were even more wonderful. As statesmanlike as Pericles, as versatile as Alcibiades, as resolute as Epaminondas, he possessed all the qualities that are most typical of the Greek genius ; and in him they were enhanced by a magnetic force which gave him undisputed control over all whom he met.

This magnetic power is one of the most striking features in Alexander's career, and it doubtless derived some of its strength from the sense of a divine origin with which his mother had inspired him. To our minds it may seem strange that any man should seriously believe himself to be the son of a god ; but it must be remembered that to the Greeks of the fourth century B.C. the characters of myth were as real as the characters of history. For Alexander and his contemporaries Achilles, the son of a goddess and a mortal father, was a real person who fought at Troy as leader of the Myrmidons : Heracles, the son of a god and a mortal mother, was a real person who by heroic deeds won his way to heaven : Dionysus, the son of a god and a mortal mother, was a real person who, after conferring countless benefits upon men, was admitted to the inner circle of the gods.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

From Achilles and from Heracles Alexander traced his descent, and when Olympias confided to him her belief that his true father was Zeus Ammon her tale could not have seemed to her son to be in itself impossible. Heracles in the same way had enjoyed the benefit of a double paternity shared between Amphytryon and Zeus, and what had happened before could surely happen again. It was the son of Philip who invaded Asia and fought at Issus, but it was the son of Zeus who came away from the oracle in the African desert, and the half-brother of Dionysus who braved the unknown dangers of the Indian Expedition. In considering the facts of Alexander's life the historian has always to take this double personality into account, and it makes him a study of the most absorbing psychological interest.

## CHAPTER I

### MACEDONIANS AND GREEKS

**T**OWARDS the end of the third millennium before the birth of Christ there began that first migration of peoples from the North and East which was destined to change the face of Mediterranean civilization as completely as did the second migration from the same points of the compass in the fifth and sixth centuries of our era. Of this later process we have full knowledge, and we can trace the steps by which Græco-Roman civilization was for a time brought down in ruin, and then in the course of centuries built up again in a different shape. But of the earlier migration of barbarians we have no written records, and it is only in recent years that the youthful science of classical archæology has thrown a light upon that distant past.

Civilization began when men discovered the art of agriculture, and instead of wandering continually in search of food settled down in a permanent home. The valley of the Nile and the alluvial plain at the head of the Persian Gulf offered a soil which was rich and easily worked, and as early as 4000 B.C. there existed in both these countries an orderly system of social life. The Pyramids, constructed in Egypt between 3000 and 2500 B.C. and the Tower of Babel,

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

built by the Sumerians in the Euphrates plain, are two of its many monuments, and by the middle of the third millennium B.C. religion, art, commerce, and sea-borne trade were all firmly established. The Egyptian Pharaoh and the King of Sumer were both great monarchs ruling over a busy and law-abiding people; and when their power declined the arts which their subjects practised found a new home in the island of Crete.

This happened about 1500 B.C., and by that time the Nordic peoples, speaking an Aryan language, were beginning to reach the Mediterranean lands. Their original habitation perhaps was the plains around the Caspian Sea,<sup>1</sup> and their slow movement southwards and westwards lasted for many centuries, one section going to India, another to Italy, and a third to Greece. Of this third section the tribes we call Achæans were the first to reach the shores of the Aegean Sea, and a period of upheaval followed which ended in the invaders assimilating a great part of the old Aegean culture and becoming themselves a seafaring people. The Achæans, however, were only the first wave of northern immigrants, and they were followed by the rougher tribes known as Dorians, who cared neither for art nor for commerce nor for exploration, but were essentially landsmen devoted to the practice of war. Of these the most typical representatives were the Spartans and the Macedonians; and to the Macedonians we may now turn.

<sup>1</sup> Others prefer the southern steppes of Russia, or that part of Europe which is now Austria and Hungary.

## MACEDONIANS AND GREEKS

Most of the Dorian tribes after they had crossed the Balkans continued on their way southwards and eventually settled in central Greece and the Peloponnese. The Macedonians were less enterprising, and when they reached the fertile plains about the lower reaches of the river Haliacmon, the modern Vardar, they were content there to remain. Of the original inhabitants many were pushed back into the mountains towards the east and north-west, where they joined with the peoples who in historical times were known as Thracians and Illyrians, these latter being the ancestors of the modern Albanians. But many remained, and by inter-marriage were gradually assimilated with the lower classes of the invaders, although the noble families took care to keep their race pure. This intermixture with barbarians explains the many traces of Illyrian and Thracian customs which we find in Macedonian religion and social life, and it supplies a slight stratum of truth to Demosthenes' taunt against Philip: 'He comes from that sink of Macedon, where it is not possible even to buy an honest slave.'

The boundaries of Macedonia were always rather vague, but for practical purposes they may be taken as follows. The river Nestus, the modern Karasu, formed the eastern limit, and at its head waters began the great semi-circle of mountains which shut Macedonia off from Thrace on the north-east and from Illyria and Epirus on the north-west; on the south Mount Olympus separated it from Thessaly. The three-pronged peninsula of Chalcidice should

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

geographically have been included, but for a long period it was in Greek hands. However, although all this country was called Macedonia, it was not until Philip's time that it came under one government and was united into one nation. The Macedonians were always fighters, and as they were organized on the clan system clan fought against clan and district against district, even as in Scotch history the Campbells fought against the Macdonalds, and the Highlands against the Lowlands. The people of the rich plain country, the semi-circle of land which lies north and west of the Gulf of Salonica, were loyal subjects under the rule of a chief who took the title of King of Macedonia. But in the hill country there were wilder clans, the Lyncestians, Orestians, Elimiotas, and Pelagonians, with their own chiefs, who for many centuries not only did not recognize his authority, but were quite ready to make war upon him either by themselves or with the help of barbarians such as the Illyrian and Thracian mountaineers. But of the life of these northern clans we know little, and in the following account the term Macedonian applies only to the dwellers on the plain.

Politically the chief characteristic of these Macedonians was their intense conservatism, a conservatism far stronger even than that of Sparta. All the other immigrants into Greece, wherever they established themselves, in the period between the tenth and the sixth centuries B.C. went through a series of changes in government. Kingships, as we find them in the *Iliad*, supported by a council of elders lasted for some

## MACEDONIANS AND GREEKS

time after the Trojan War, and then in the eighth century were gradually superseded by aristocracies, who got possession of the land and allowed the unprivileged to cultivate it for their benefit. Popular discontent led to their overthrow, and from 650 to 500 B.C. was the Age of the Tyrants, rulers relying on armed force but in many cases enlightened patrons of art and commerce. Finally, after the year 500, democracies, tempered in many cities by a spell of oligarchy, became the rule, and tended to grow more and more extreme. Everywhere in Greece we find the same process; and although Sparta retained a nominal kingship, the royal authority was divided between two persons, and the real power lay with the oligarchic Council and the democratic Board of Ephors.

From all this the Macedonians stood quite aloof. The cardinal doctrine of Greek democracy, that the state was the people and the people the state, for them had no meaning. As for sea power, on which the prosperity of such cities as Athens and Corinth depended, they had neither conception nor desire of it. They possessed a stretch of coast with natural harbours, but they allowed the southern Greeks to settle on it and establish trading ports; and in the sixth century B.C. they had as little knowledge of the sea as had the early immigrants in the days when the Argonauts, according to Greek legend, built the first ship that ever sailed the waters, although in fact navigation in the Mediterranean had then been practised for over a thousand years.



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Even at the time of the Persian Wars, 490-480 B.C., Macedonia was in much the same state as Phthia had been in the days of Achilles, and Mycenæ in the days of Agamemnon. It is not surprising that Alexander found his exemplars of conduct in Heracles and Achilles rather than in Cimon and Pericles, for the people among whom he lived were far nearer to the Homeric warriors than they were to the democratic statesmen of fifth-century Greece. The Macedonian king, like Odysseus, was the father of his people, and had over them all the rights that a father among the Nordic races had over his children. The whole countryside was his personal property, and could be granted by him in fief to whomsoever he wished. By a word he could remit all imposts of money and all obligations of service if he thought fit: he could summon everyone of his clansmen to fight in his army, and in his absence he could delegate all his authority to a deputy. In his family also he was absolute master. He could put away one wife and marry another; he could choose any one of his sons as his successor. In the words of Demosthenes he was in his single person lord of all things, both secret and open, at once monarch, treasurer, and commander-in-chief.

On this power there was only one check. If any Macedonian was accused of treason against the king, the procedure followed was that which was used many centuries later by the Lombards in Italy. An assembly of the whole people was called together in time of peace, an assembly of the whole army in time of war,

## MACEDONIANS AND GREEKS

and they not only gave a verdict in the case, but if the culprit was found guilty and condemned to death they carried out the sentence with their own hands. Furthermore, although the king might appoint his successor, his choice was not valid until the army had given its consent, and in cases of disputed succession the army had the deciding voice. The army indeed was the nation, for the Macedonians had no subject races under their control, and military rank went side by side with social position. The poorer men served in the infantry; the richer, who could find themselves a horse, formed the cavalry and were called the king's 'Companions,' the Greek word 'Hetairoi' being the same as is used in Homer of the Myrmidons of Achilles.

In physique and in temperament the Macedonians closely resembled the Bœotians, whose national hero Heracles, that great eater, drinker, and fighter, was also their own. They were sturdy men of powerful build, not wasp-waisted like the slim Athenians, but yet active and untiring in the field. They had no great love for athletics, and were trained to wield a spear rather than to hurl a discus, accustomed to the parade ground rather than to the wrestling school. The Athenians considered that they ate too much meat and drank too much wine; and held them in consequence to be barbarians. Certainly the elegant conversation of an Attic symposium was far removed from the riot in which a Macedonian dinner party too often ended. For art and literature the ordinary man had little use: in peace he was a farmer, enjoying

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

to the full the good things of the earth ; in war he was a soldier, resolute, fearless, and obedient, who under a good commander was capable of anything.

It must be acknowledged that the Macedonians, like the Romans, were somewhat gross in their habits. But their extremely practical outlook on life was modified by a mystical religion, probably derived in part from Thrace. Their national divinity was not the impersonal Zeus, the ambiguous Apollo, nor the emblematic Athena : he was Dionysus, the god of ecstasy. The men, as they quaffed his gift, the juice of the grape, passed from the realities of this world into the realm of fancy ; and even more complete was the women's escape, when in the lonely forests they surrendered themselves to his influence. The last of the great Athenian dramatists in his old age left his native city for Macedonia ; and in the play which he wrote there he gives a vivid picture of such a scene. The stiff-necked Pentheus refuses to believe in the divinity of Dionysus ; and a messenger describes to him how he came upon a throng of Bacchanals in a mountain glade and there saw strange sights.

‘ Then all round,  
Alert, the warm sleep fallen from their eyes,  
A marvel of swift ranks I saw them rise,  
Dames young and old and gentle maids unwed  
Among them. O'er their shoulders first they shed  
Their tresses, and caught up the fallen fold  
Of mantles where some clasp had loosened hold,  
And girt the dappled fawn-skins in with long  
Quick snakes that hissed and writhed with quivering tongue,

## MACEDONIANS AND GREEKS

And one a young fawn held, and one a wild  
Wolf cub, and fed them with white milk, and smiled  
In love, young mothers with a mother's breast  
And babes at home forgotten ! Then they pressed  
Wreathed ivy round their brows, and oaken sprays  
And flowering bryony. And one would raise  
Her wand and smite the rock, and straight a jet  
Of quick bright water came. Another set  
Her thyrsus in the bosomed earth, and there  
Was red wine that the God sent up to her,  
A darkling fountain. And if any lips  
Sought whiter draughts, with dipping finger-tips  
They pressed the sod, and gushing from the ground  
Came springs of milk. And reed-wands ivy-crowned  
Ran with sweet honey, drop by drop.'

Euripides. *Bacchæ* (692-711)

(tr. G. Murray).

The cult of Dionysus was part of the Greek national religion and, as Nietzsche has shown, his spiritual influence on Greek life and art was as great as the intellectual influence of Apollo. He was not properly speaking one of the Olympians, the gods whom the northern invaders brought into Greece, nor had he any connection with the dark and sinister spirits, the Kers in all their various shapes, whom the Aegean people worshipped. His mother was a mortal woman, daughter of Cadmus king of Thebes ; but she was visited by a god and it was from the god's body that he was born, to live for many years on earth before he joined his father again in heaven. In most of the city states, and especially in Athens, his feasts were made an occasion for dramatic performances, for he was

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

the god of illusion as well as the god of ecstasy, and these performances were held to have a certain purifying effect upon the audience. But in the northern parts of Greece, in Epirus, in Thessaly, and in Macedonia, his worship took on a more spiritual character. The adepts in his mysteries, male and female, the Bacchi and Bacchæ, identified themselves with the god whose name they bore, and performed, or imagined that they performed, such miracles as Euripides describes. Whether this self-hypnotism was altogether beneficial may be questioned, but of its influence on Macedonian women and especially on Olympias, mother of Alexander, there can be no doubt.

If we may believe Herodotus, the genealogy of the Macedonian royal family, the Argeads, from whom Alexander descended, was in the first seven generations as follows: Perdiccas I, Argæus, Philip I, Aeropus, Alcetas, Amyntas, and Alexander I. Perdiccas, according to the historian, was the son of Temenus, king of Argos and great great grandson of Heracles. For some reason Perdiccas with his two brothers migrated from the Peloponnese to Macedonia and took service with the king of the country. The King's wife noticed that whenever she baked bread the loaf meant for Perdiccas swelled to double the usual size, and her husband, disliking the omen, told the brothers they had better go. They asked for their wages but the King pointed to a ray of sunlight which had come in through the chimney opening and told them to take that. Thereupon Perdiccas drew his knife, and

## MACEDONIANS AND GREEKS

making as if to cut the light, took three handfuls of it into his bosom. He then went to another part of Macedonia under Mount Bermius, close to the rose gardens of the Phrygian Midas, where every bloom had sixty leaves of marvellous fragrance, and after living in this delectable spot for a time returned, overthrew the king, and established himself in his place.<sup>1</sup>

The next Macedonian King of whom we hear in history was Aeropus, who as a child was placed in a cradle behind his clansmen to encourage them in resisting the Illyrian invaders, and as a man succeeded for a time in breaking the Illyrian power. He was followed by his grandson Amyntas I who was King in 516 B.C., the year after Darius' expedition against the Scythians, when Megabazus with a Persian army marched into Thrace ; and of him and his son Alexander Herodotus tells another curious tale.<sup>2</sup> Megabazus sent seven envoys to Amyntas, asking earth and water from him as a sign of his submission to the Great King ; Amyntas perforce complied and gave a banquet to the envoys, who after dinner suggested to their host that he should bring his women forward. Amyntas said that it was not the country's custom, but as they were masters he must obey ; and thereupon called the women in. They, however, sat modestly apart, until the Persians, who were warm with wine, cried to them to come closer and began to fondle their breasts and kiss them. The King sat quiet, but Alexander was bolder, and after persuading his father

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, VIII, 137, 138.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, V, 17-21.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

to retire told the Persians that they could have their will later if first they would allow the ladies to take a bath. The Persians agreed, and Alexander then dressed up seven young men in women's clothes, supplied them with daggers and brought them back to the hall. Each envoy drew one partner down on his couch, but when they tried an embrace the youths drew their daggers and stabbed them to death.

For this murder we are told that Alexander escaped punishment by giving his sister Gygæa in marriage to one of the great Persian nobles, and when in 480 B.C. Xerxes came down upon Greece he was allowed to retain his throne. He was skilful enough to keep favour both with the Greeks and the Persians, and after the battle of Salamis Xerxes sent him to Athens to offer the Athenians peace and friendship with Persia. The offer was refused and Alexander went back to his own country; but just before the battle of Plataea in 479 he paid the Athenians in camp another visit and gave them valuable information about the Persian plans. For this and for other services after the war he received the name of 'Phil-hellen,' friend of the Greeks, and his gilded statue was set up at Delphi. But in spite of that, when he wished to compete at the Olympic Games, he was at first refused permission as being a barbarian, and it was only after his claim to be descended from Temenus was admitted, that his entry was allowed.

The friendly relations which Alexander I had established with Athens were continued by his son

## MACEDONIANS AND GREEKS

Perdiccas II, who reigned from about 460 to 413 B.C. The friendship was of advantage to both sides, for the Athenians helped Perdiccas in subduing the highland clans and introducing civilization into the wilder parts of the country, while Perdiccas allowed the Athenians to take control of Chalcidice and to found the colony of Amphipolis at the mouth of the river Strymon. The death of Perdiccas occurred in the same year as the failure of the Athenian expedition in Sicily, but his successor, Archelaus, was strong enough to do without outside help. He cut roads through the mountains, which enabled traders to penetrate into the interior, he built chains of forts to keep the highlanders in check, and to his court at Pella he invited many of the leading Greek poets and artists. Euripides spent the last years of his life with him; Timotheus, author of the *Persæ*, was another of his guests, the painter Zeuxis decorated his palace; and under Mount Olympus he established contests in honour of the Muses and Olympian Zeus. Thucydides, who knew him, declares that he did more for Macedonia than all his eight predecessors together; but unfortunately his reign was of comparatively short duration, and after his murder in 399 a period of turmoil followed which lasted for forty years.

Of the six years after the death of Archelaus we know little, but in 393 Alexander's grandfather, Amyntas II, came to the Macedonian throne. He found it a thorny seat, for the highlanders had hastened to take advantage of his country's weakness and were



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

continually making forays upon the plain. The clan of the Lyncestians were foremost in these plundering raids, and finally one of their chiefs, a man called Argæus, defeated Amyntas in battle and usurped his place. It is doubtful if Amyntas by himself would ever have regained power; but the Lyncestians themselves were divided and the heads of one of their families known as the Bacchiads agreed to reinstate him if he would marry a woman of their house. Amyntas agreed, Eurydice became his wife, and in 390 he was put back upon the throne. There he stayed until his death in 369, and during his reign Eurydice bore him three sons, Alexander, Perdikkas and Philip. In his time the balance of power in Greece frequently changed, but both from Sparta during the period of her supremacy, and from Athens after the battle of Naxos in 376 he obtained support, and he died before the results of the battle of Leuctra in 371 had any effect in the north.

Alexander II, the eldest son of Amyntas II, succeeded his father, but his reign was short and unhappy. A pretender, Pausanias, at once put up against him and had the support of the Thebans, who desired to weaken all the northern states. His mother Eurydice was an even greater danger, for she planned to give the throne to Ptolemy of Alorus, her son-in-law and lover, for whom she had betrayed her husband's bed during his lifetime. She put her plot into execution although Pausanias was already advancing to give battle. A troop of players was brought in to the palace at Pella to give a war dance before the young

## MACEDONIANS AND GREEKS

king, and in the midst of their evolutions they fell at her order upon Alexander and dispatched him with their swords. Many of the loyal Macedonians at once went over to Pausanias and it seemed that Eurydice had committed her abominable crime in vain. But the famous Athenian general Iphicrates happened at that moment to be in Chalcidice with a small force, and Eurydice put herself under his protection and made her two younger sons, Perdiccas and Philip, embrace his knees as suppliants. The old man consented to help the legitimate heir, Pausanias was chased over the border into Thrace, and Perdiccas sat upon the throne.

So far so good. But Perdiccas was still a minor and the queen-mother and her paramour, who took the title of Regent, held the real power. The support of Thebes was necessary if they were to keep their position, for the Macedonians regarded them both with extreme disfavour, but when they came to terms with Pelopidas in 367, they were for a time secure. In 364, however, Perdiccas reached manhood and put Ptolemy to death and then with the support of the Athenian general Timotheus established himself firmly upon the throne. But once again Eurydice, enraged at her lover's murder, intervened against her own children, and called upon the Lyncestian highlanders to invade the plain. Perdiccas went out to meet them and fell in battle, leaving only an infant son to succeed him. The whole country was in turmoil: the Lyncestians burned and plundered; the Pæonians from the north came down to share in the

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

spoil ; Pausanias with an army of Thracians marched in from the east ; and still another claimant was supported by Athens. All seemed lost : but in this, her darkest hour, Macedonia at last in Philip found a man.

## CHAPTER II

### PHILIP OF MACEDON

**P**HILIP, the third son of Amyntas II, was born at Pella in 382 B.C. and there received his early education. His father died when he was thirteen, and two years later, when the Thebans were in Macedonia, he was handed over to them by his mother as a hostage and taken to Thebes. There he remained in the house of Pammenes until he was eighteen, and in these three years, the most impressionable period in a young man's life, the foundations of his future success were laid. The lessons which he learned at Thebes he never forgot, and he passed them on to Alexander; so that it will not be out of place to give some account here of what those lessons were.

The first of them was this. In a ruler personal magnetism is all important, and the influence that a really great man can exercise upon a vigorous people is incalculable. In Thebes at this time there were two such men, Epaminondas and Pelopidas, and in a few years they had made their city the most powerful state in south-eastern Europe. Both were gallant soldiers; but while Pelopidas was nothing but a soldier and won all his triumphs on the field of battle, Epaminondas was a true Greek in his versatility, a great tactician, a great orator, and a great statesman.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

He combined Athenian culture with Spartan discipline ; and although the average Theban was far too dull to understand him properly, by sheer force of character he won from his fellow-countrymen their willing obedience. Without Epaminondas the Thebans would have remained content to eat and drink and play, to enjoy the sensual pleasures of life and to let higher things go. With him for a brief space they cast aside their gluttony, their coarseness, and their selfish indifference, and aspired under his guidance to be the leading state of Greece.

The second lesson was deduced from the first and ran as follows. In a competitive world where quarrels are eventually settled by force of arms, if a ruler wishes to have real power he should either himself be a military genius or at least have a strong army with good generals under his direct control. All through the fifth century B.C. battles between the Greek city states were fought on fixed rules, and a general's chief function was to make an eloquent speech to his men before the engagement. The two armies faced one another on a plain, and advanced in two long lines of heavy infantry to the attack. When the two lines came into collision the issue was quickly decided ; and whichever army suffered the heavier losses retired from the field, and acknowledged defeat by sending a herald to ask permission to take up their dead. It was to this sort of fighting that the Spartans owed their prestige ; but Epaminondas introduced a new system of tactics which completely changed the situation. He invented the 'oblique

## PHILIP OF MACEDON

attack' and divided his line of battle into two wings, an offensive left wing in very deep formation whose task it was to advance quickly and force a decision by sheer weight of numbers, and a weaker right wing which moved forward more slowly and remained on the defensive while the left was winning the day. Moreover, when once the enemy began to yield, Epaminondas did not allow them to retire at their ease without further loss. In his formation troops of cavalry were stationed at either end of the line, and they took up the pursuit at once, cutting down the fugitives until darkness ended the battle.

The third lesson depended not on psychology or on military tactics, but on political observation. While Philip was living in Thebes he realized that the Greek city states, Thebes included, had become incapable either of forming a national confederation or of defending themselves individually against a determined enemy. Pericles had dreamed of a partnership in which all Greeks should have a share provided that they recognized Athens as their head. But that dream was shattered by the Peloponnesian War, and in 404 B.C. Sparta assumed the place which Pericles had designed for his own city. A few years were sufficient to prove Sparta's incapacity, and in order to secure her position she had to call on Persia for help, as the price of assistance handing over the Greek cities of Asia to their ancestral enemy. The battle of Leuctra followed in 371 B.C., which put Thebes in Sparta's place and allowed her, while Epaminondas lived, to impose her will on Greece. But the 'Leuctran

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

insolence' which the Thebans displayed soon made them as unpopular as the Spartans had been; and it was obvious that when once Epaminondas had gone Theban supremacy would disappear with him.

These, then, were the three guiding thoughts which inspired Philip when in 364 he returned from Thebes to his native country, and it was to put them into effect that in 359 he accepted the post of danger on the Macedonian throne. The history of his life after that date may be divided into three periods. In the first period, after crushing the Illyrians and securing his northern frontiers against the barbarians, he created a united Macedonia by the agency of a national army which he afterwards handed on to his son to be the instrument of world conquest. In the second period by a judicious mixture of fraud and force—or more politely, by the use of diplomacy and military strength—he brought the Greek city states under his control. Athens, spurred on by Demosthenes, was his most obstinate opponent; but when the cities at length accepted the gage of battle in 338 B.C., the issue was decided once for all on the field of Chæronea. In the third period, cut short by his death, he was preparing, as Captain General of Greece, to take up against Persia the aggressive which the Greeks themselves had neglected for over a century to pursue. The League of Delos, founded after Plataea to continue operations, was diverted from its original purpose: Athens and Sparta both accepted Persian gold during the long struggle of the Peloponnesian War: Sparta, by the peace of Antalcidas in 386, definitely betrayed

## PHILIP OF MACEDON

the Greek cause : and it was left to a Macedonian to avenge the destruction of Athens by Xerxes in 480 B.C.

Philip's accession to the throne quickly changed the face of affairs in Macedonia. He won over the Athenians by surrendering his claims to their rebellious colony of Amphipolis ; he bought off the Thracians and Pæonians for the moment by means of a money payment ; and he set to work to fill his treasury by opening up the gold mine of Mount Pangæus. The first winter he spent in hiring mercenaries from Greece and South Italy, and in training his rough clansmen for regular warfare. Rigorous discipline was enforced ; in route marches with full kit thirty-five miles were covered in a day ; and when Philip heard that a Tarentine captain had taken a warm bath, he dismissed him at once with the remark that a Macedonian woman washed in cold water even in childbed. By the early spring of 358 he had an army of ten thousand infantry and six hundred horsemen, ready to go anywhere and to do anything ; and he proceeded to take the offensive against his enemies on the northern frontier.

The Pæonians and the Illyrians were his first objective, the former giving little trouble and breaking up after one defeat. The Illyrians were more obstinate and ventured on a pitched battle where Philip was able for the first time to use the tactics which he had learned at Thebes. With his right wing and centre he engaged the barbarians, keeping his cavalry in reserve upon the left. The Illyrians offered a stout



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

resistance at first, but as the battle progressed they allowed their ranks to fall into disorder. Philip thereupon developed the real attack from the left and while his cavalry charged upon that flank his centre advanced to support them. The Illyrians, taken on two sides, broke and fled, to be cut down by the pursuing cavalry ; and when they sent a flag of truce to arrange for burial Philip fell upon them ruthlessly again so that they left more than seven thousand dead upon the field. This victory cleared the northern marches and soon afterwards Philip took Amphipolis by storm, and built the fortress of Philippi to protect the gold mines, which from this time began to produce a yearly revenue of nearly a quarter of a million.

With the money thus provided the way was open for the creation of a national standing army, which should combine the patriotic spirit of the Greek city levies with the military efficiency of the professional soldier. It was to be a large force, composed mainly of Macedonians inspired by national spirit ; soldiering was meant to be their life trade, the prizes of war their reward, and they were to remain long enough with the colours to acquire perfect discipline. Such an army as Philip saw would fulfil a double object. It would serve his immediate purpose, the unification of all the tribes and classes in Macedonia ; for in it the feudal chiefs would have their place of command, and the hill men serving side by side with the farmers of the plain would forget their ancient feuds : and when once unity was secured by a brotherhood in arms, it would be an effective weapon for the per-

## PHILIP OF MACEDON

formance of his second task, the subjugation of the Greek cities. For six years he laboured raising the army, drilling it, and inspiring it with military spirit : and then he introduced the new organization, the new tactics, and the new weapon, which make him one of the great figures in the history of war.

He began by enrolling all his subjects capable of bearing arms in territorial regiments according to their local divisions, and then proceeded to grade these regiments in a scale of honour, to produce a spirit of healthy emulation. Service in the heavy cavalry ranked first : they were the king's 'Companions,' and Philip promoted any one he wished, Macedonian or Greek, to their number, so that in the final organization their original six hundred had increased to two thousand men, who were divided into eight squadrons of two hundred and fifty each. All of these were 'Royals,' and one squadron, the Agema, which rode in battle on the extreme right wing, was the 'King's Own.' Among the infantry there was also one *corps d'élite*, the 'Foot Guards' or 'Shield bearers,' a brigade of three regiments ; one of them, a thousand strong, being distinguished as the 'King's Own Foot.' The rest of the Macedonian infantry, who normally served in the six great regiments composing the phalanx, were known as 'Foot Companions.' Below them, and without any special title, were the mercenaries and light-armed troops.

These were the regimental grades for service in the ranks, and corresponding to them was a hierarchy of officers. The lowest scale here was the Corps of

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Pages, a body composed of youths of good family, who were in constant attendance upon the King both in peace time and in war, and thus learned by personal experience the military duties which in manhood they would be called upon to fulfil. Above them were all those officers who were engaged in special work, the 'Companions of the King's Person,' answering in some ways to our staff, and in others to the 'consilium' of officers which a Roman general kept about him, but in much closer relationship to their royal commander than either of these bodies. Then came the colonels of the various regiments of horse and foot, who sometimes gave their own names to the units which they commanded. And then, highest of all, the 'Guards of the King's Person,' the marshals of the Macedonian army system. Their number, as might be expected, varied at different periods: in Alexander's later years there were at least eight, in Philip's time Parmenio and Antipater stood by themselves.

This new professional organization was backed up by new fighting methods. The Greeks had always used the phalanx formation for their heavy infantry, making their line vary in depth according to the nature of the ground and the number of men available, but relying eventually on sheer weight rather than on skilful manœuvring. A closely packed wedge of men, such as the twenty-five ranks deep formation which Epaminondas used, went through the enemy's line by its own momentum; and it was hardly necessary, or indeed possible, for any one man in it to show

## PHILIP OF MACEDON

individual courage or skill. This Theban method of the wedge, however, had one grave disadvantage: a mobile and well-trained enemy could take it on the flank, and upon rough ground its ranks were very apt to fall into disorder. Philip therefore trained his infantry in a new fashion, and made them stand in open order, twelve ranks deep. There was a three-foot space between both ranks and files, and thus each man had the opportunity to use his spear to the best advantage. A new weapon was also provided, the *Sarissa*, a longer spear than any then in use, which enabled the Macedonians in a battle to strike the first blow. In later times the *Sarissa* reached the extravagant length of twenty-four feet, so that the men in the front rank of the phalanx were covered by six points; but in Philip's day it was a much handier weapon, about twelve feet long; and although its proper use required careful training, it did not render quick movement impossible.

The men of the phalanx were armed with sword and spear, and defended by a small shield strapped on to the left arm, a metal helmet, and a leather jerkin. They were thus a cross between the hoplites and the peltasts of a Greek army, and nearer to the former than to the latter. But in the new tactics, which Philip introduced and Alexander followed, the phalanx infantry were not of supreme importance. They played a great part in every battle, and it was the sturdy courage and unflinching discipline of these foot-sloggers that made it possible for their commanders to engage and hold an enemy many times

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

superior in numbers. But strictly speaking, their part in the action was a subordinate one, and the phalanx seldom of its own initiative decided the battle. Both Philip and Alexander were born cavalry leaders, and for a crushing blow they relied chiefly on their heavy cavalry armed with a thrusting spear, a force with which the Greek city states had little acquaintance. In all their great battles the procedure was the same : the phalanx held the enemy like a pair of pincers, the cavalry struck like a hammer ; and it was not until Alexander's Iranian and Indian campaigns that any change in army organization was necessary.

A united nation and a national army were the two great gifts which Philip made to his son. The subjugation of Greece, as regards its effects on Alexander's career, was of less importance. It was, however, a difficult task, which cost Philip the best fifteen years of his life, and he threw himself into it with all the powers of his mind and body. 'What a man,' cried Demosthenes, 'had we to fight ! For the sake of power and dominion he had an eye thrust out, a shoulder broken, an arm and a leg mortified. Which-ever member fortune demanded, that he cast away, so the rest might be in glory and honour.' The eye was lost in taking Methone from the Athenians in 353, and in the summer of that year he moved for the first time southwards and entered Thessaly where the so-called Sacred War was then pursuing its calamitous course. For the moment he was repulsed by the Phocians and the mercenaries whom they had hired with the sacred treasure of Delphi. But in 352, coming

## PHILIP OF MACEDON

again with a stronger force, he won a decisive battle, occupied Pheræ, Pagasæ, and Magnesia, and returned home in triumph to conclude a maritime league with Cardia, Perinthus, and Byzantium.

His intention to make Macedonia the paramount power in the Balkans was now plain, and in 351 Demosthenes delivered his *First Philippic*, urging the Athenians to conduct the war against him, which they had formally declared in 357, with much more energy unless they wished to see all the northern coast towns fall into his hands. Philip's reply to this was to declare war on Olynthus, the most important town in the Chalcidic Peninsula, which had just concluded a treaty of alliance with Athens. The Athenians sent a small fleet and two thousand mercenaries to their aid, but as they had omitted to supply the troops with pay the expedition returned almost at once. Meanwhile Philip with the strong siege train which he was the first to employ in Greece moved slowly towards the doomed town, taking the smaller towns of its confederation on his way. His siege engines, however, on this occasion were not required. Before he had been long outside, gold did its work and traitors opened the gates to him. The walls of Olynthus were razed to the ground, its inhabitants sold into slavery, the money going into Philip's treasury; and that year he celebrated Olympic games in Macedonia.

By this time there was a pro-Macedonian party in most of the Greek cities, with Æschines as its chief Athenian representative, and in 346, Demosthenes

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

being somewhat out of favour since the fall of Olynthus, Athens concluded peace with Philip. That year also he got possession of the pass of Thermopylæ, the most convenient road into South Greece, and was able to bring the Sacred War to an end. Phocis ceased to be an independent state, the Delphians returned to their plundered temple, and in the Amphyctyonic Council, which controlled the sacred territory, Philip took the place which Phocis had held. In the autumn he presided at the Pythian games and his fame had so spread through all Greece that, as Theopompus tells us, a simple Arcadian at Delphi, when stopped for running in the precinct, cried out that he was running, and would run still, until he came to a people that knew not Philip.

For the next six years, 346-340, our authorities give us little exact information of Philip's movements ; but we know that he gathered to himself many of the most vigorous spirits in Greece, and that his court at Pella was the scene both of carefully arranged diplomacy and also of wild carousals. Money was plentiful and Philip was as lavish with it as Alexander was after him, so that the historian Theopompus has perhaps some justification for his censure : ' When Philip became master of great wealth he did not merely spend it in haste. No, he flung it away and threw it into the street. He was the worst manager in all the world, both himself and his associates. In a word, not one of them had the least knowledge of right living or the prudent management of an estate. For this he himself was responsible, being both in-

## PHILIP OF MACEDON

satiable and extravagant and doing everything offhand, whether he was getting or giving. He was always busy with his soldiering and had no time to reckon up income and expenditure. Moreover, his companions were men who had come pouring in from many places; some were from his home country, others from Thessaly, others from all the rest of Greece, and they were not selected on grounds of merit. No! pretty well every lecher and dare-devil and buffoon, in the Greek and barbarian world, flocked to Macedonia and got the title of "Philip's companion." Even if a man was not a ruffian on his arrival, he soon became one under the influence of the Macedonian life and habits. It was partly their wars and campaigns, partly their extravagances that turned them into dare-devils, living not in an orderly fashion but prodigally like highwaymen.'

But with Philip revelry had only its proper place in the scheme of things, and inclined though he was by nature to gross indulgence he never allowed his pleasures to interfere with his plans. An unsociable water-drinker like Demosthenes might rail at his love of wine, but Philip drunk was more clear-headed than most men when they are sober. The boon companions whom he pledged at table were also the agents to whom he entrusted the execution of his political schemes, and after 346 they established themselves in nearly every city of Greece except Sparta and Athens. Sparta never yielded her independence and was the only state that refused to join in the Persian campaign. Athens, after making peace with Philip in 346, had



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

then another sudden change of feeling and henceforth stubbornly refused all his overtures of friendship.

The king himself, however, although his agents were busy on his behalf, never seems to have come southwards during these six years ; and it was through the oligarchies and tyrannies established in his interest that he gained control of Thessaly, Eubœa, and many other districts in Greece. For the moment his own activities were transferred to the north and to the execution of the great plan whereby he meant to bring under his rule the northern shores of the Aegean and the western shores of the Black Sea, together with all the country behind them as far north as the Danube. Hard fighting against the Illyrians, Dardanians and Triballi occupied most of his time in 345 and 344, and in 342 he and his army set off for a long campaign in Thrace. For ten months the struggle went on, each new district being secured by the foundation of military colonies, such as Philippopolis, familiar to modern travellers as a railway station on the long journey to Constantinople, and the penal settlement of Poneropolis, 'Rascaltown.' And then, the hinterland at last subdued, he was just about to move down to the sea when he heard that the two great Propontic cities, Byzantium and Perinthus, had been persuaded by Demosthenes to declare war against him, and that Athens and Persia were both in league with them.

It was in the spring of 340 that Philip received this news ; and gathering together his siege train he marched down to invest Perinthus. The town was

## PHILIP OF MACEDON

naturally very strong, being perched upon a hill at the end of a neck of land running out into the sea. With his rams and huge wooden towers Philip made a breach in the first lines of defence across the isthmus, only to find himself faced by a second and even stronger fortification. Volleys of stones from his catapults and attacks by storming parties, carried on night and day without rest, at last broke through this obstacle, and the town itself was reached. But progress now was more difficult than ever, for the houses rose in tiers up the steep hill side and, as they had been joined together by barricades, they formed line upon line of wellnigh impassable barriers.

The town was being supplied with provisions by its allies who commanded the sea, and after the siege had lasted for some months Philip decided upon a diversion. Withdrawing from Perinthus he hastened to Byzantium and as an old ally asked for admittance. The governor of the city was a philosopher named Leon, and the answer he gave was that Philip's spearmen did not look very like friends ; and so a second siege began. Byzantium was neither as strong nor as well defended as Perinthus, and when his siege engines had prepared the way Philip resolved one dark night to attempt a storm. His men were actually under the wall when the town dogs gave the alarm, and a falling meteor revealed their danger to the defenders. The storming party had to withdraw, and a little later Philip abandoned the siege and marched northwards against the Scythians from whom he exacted a contribution of twenty thousand mares for his

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

cavalry stud. On his return homewards his army was attacked by the Triballi, and in the fighting he received a serious wound : and so the year 340 ended.

Philip was unsuccessful at Perinthus and at Byzantium, but neither check was really serious ; and both sieges, by reason of one incident in each, have become famous. At Byzantium the people erected a statue of Hecate the Torch Bearer to commemorate the failure of the night attack, and also struck coins bearing her emblem of the crescent moon ; an emblem which eventually was borrowed from Byzantium by Constantinople and from Constantinople by the Turks. To the attack on Perinthus Philip summoned his son and heir, then a lad of sixteen, and it was in the fighting outside the town that Alexander received his initiation into active warfare.

### CHAPTER III

#### HEIR-APPARENT

**I**T is seldom that a great man marries a great woman : firstly, because great men and great women are rare, and secondly, because a strong character feels instinctively the need of independence, and prefers to work in its own way without help. It may be too that Nature herself is obscurely hostile to such unions ; for they are luxuries and Nature is nothing if not economical. Whatever the cause may be, a match between two people both of exceptional ability is uncommon, and few children have both a great father and a great mother. When such a child arrives into the world two things can happen : he may be completely overshadowed and develop a sense of inferiority ; or, if the great qualities of his parents are of different kinds he may combine them in himself and surpass them both. Of this second result Alexander is the most striking example in history.

Macedonian women, as we have said, were entirely different creatures from their Greek sisters. In Athens, and in those cities which followed Athenian customs, women spent most of their time indoors and lived the narrowest of lives. They seldom saw any men save their own relatives, they took no part in politics, and only appeared at a public function on the occasion

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

of some religious festival, when they walked in a procession to a temple and then walked home again. They were in consequence dull, timid, and secretive ; and even the acutest of men regarded them as being both mentally and morally very little superior to slaves. Macedonian women, especially those of the ruling classes, were of an exactly opposite type ; and instead of being over-timid they were usually over-bold. They had the virtues of their men, their vigour, their enterprise, their courage ; but they had also their vices, their coarseness, their greed, and their cruelty : in Macedonia the female was the deadlier of the species. At the beginning of the Hellenistic period we have Olympias, the mother of Alexander ; at the end we have Cleopatra, a woman who in political genius is only equalled by Alexander himself.

When Philip was a lad, some time before his sojourn at Thebes, he went to the island of Samothrace in the north Aegean to be initiated in the mysteries of the Cabiri. The true names of the four deities, who were thus known to the outer world, were only revealed to the initiate, who therefore alone could call upon them for help in time of trouble : and as they were very powerful gods it was as much part of a Macedonian's education to go to Samothrace as it was of an Athenian's to go to Eleusis for the mysteries of Demeter. Neophytes from all the lands of northern Greece assembled there, male and female ; and among them on the occasion of Philip's visit was the orphan daughter of Neoptolemus of Epirus, who claimed to be the direct descendant of Achilles. The boy and girl became

## HEIR-APPARENT

acquainted, and it is possible that in the license of the festival they formed close ties of intimacy. In any case Philip never forgot their meeting, and when he returned from Thebes he asked the girl's hand in marriage from her uncle Arybbas, who had succeeded Neoptolemus as king of the Molossians, and obtained his request.

Since the episode at Samothrace the young pair had followed very different paths. Philip had developed the practical side of his nature, and was a perfect type of the man of action, resolute to the verge of brutality, prudent to the verge of duplicity, prepared to use any means, however doubtful, provided that he could attain his end. His vision was keen but narrow; his ambition limited to the aggrandizement of himself and his kingdom; his idea of pleasure, wine, women, and song. On the other hand the Epirote princess, who was at first called Polyxena from the Trojan virgin offered as a sacrifice to the shade of Achilles, had changed her name to Olympias, the maid of the sacred mountain, and had devoted herself to the cult of the Unseen. She was an adept in all the mysterious rites which the northern women so fervently practised. On the mountain side or in the forest with a band of fellow-worshippers she would beat the timbrel, whirl in the dance, and cry loud in ecstasy, until her spirit was released from its earthly fetters and enjoyed a mystic communion with the Infinite. It mattered not by what name the god was called, Zeus, Ammon, Dionysus, Sabazios: he was but one divinity of many forms, and Olympias

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

believed that often he took incarnate shape in one of the great mountain snakes which she fondled to her breast.

The marriage took place in 357, two years after Philip had ascended the Macedonian throne, and as might be expected it was marked by signs and omens. The night before its physical consummation Olympias dreamed that a thunderbolt fell upon her womb, and kindled a fire which broke into flames that spread all about and were then extinguished. Philip for his part some time later dreamed that he put upon his wife's womb a seal which had a lion as device; a dream interpreted by the soothsayer Aristander as signifying the coming birth of a son who should be bold as a lion. It is said, however, that Philip doubted this interpretation; for he was greatly disturbed by the fact that he had seen a huge serpent stretched out in bed by his wife's side. He therefore sent a special messenger to the shrine of Apollo at Delphi, but was not very greatly comforted by the answer which he received from the oracle. He was warned that he would lose the eye with which he had peeped through the bedroom door, and that the serpent was the god Ammon, to whom in future he had best pay especial honour.

The correct interpretation of dreams is notoriously difficult; and whatever significance be attached to these visions, the historian's chief duty is to record the fact that early in 356 Olympias was delivered of a son. It is said that on the same day Philip, who had just captured Potidæa, received news that his

## HEIR-APPARENT

general Parmenio had won a great victory over the Illyrians, and that his racehorse had secured a prize at the Olympic Games. This joyful message probably served as a counterpoise to the somewhat depressing reply from Delphi; and when the soothsayers were again consulted they assured the king that a son whose birth coincided with three victories was plainly destined by heaven to be himself ever victorious.

Whatever Philip's feelings may have been at Alexander's arrival we may be sure that Olympias rejoiced in her child. In his early years she lavished on him all the love of her vehement nature, and when he grew too old for the nursery she induced one of her own kinsmen, a man of the strictest virtue named Leonidas, to act as 'pedagogue' or moral instructor to the boy. Leonidas was a stern disciplinarian, and would look into his pupil's box to see if his mother had sent him any forbidden dainties; but Alexander always remembered him with gratitude, and in later life would recall his saying: 'The best appetizer for breakfast is a night march; the best appetizer for dinner is a light breakfast.' Strict discipline indeed was very necessary in the young prince's case, for even in boyhood ambition, pride, and courage were his predominant qualities. When he was told of one of his father's many victories, he would sigh, and say that nothing soon would be left for him to conquer. When he was asked if he would compete in the foot-race at the Olympic Games he replied: 'Yes, if the other competitors are kings.' As for his cool courage, this is attested by the well-known story of Bucephalas.



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

One day a Thessalian horse-coper appeared at Philip's court with a magnificent horse, Bucephalas 'Bull-head,' for which he asked three thousand pounds. The price was stiff, but Philip liked its looks and was inclined to buy, bargaining first for a trial ride. The horse was taken to the meadows outside Pella that evening, but no one was able to mount or manage him, so that at last Philip lost patience and bade the Thessalian take the beast away. Alexander, who was standing by, murmured: 'What a horse to lose, just because they are too stupid or too cowardly to manage him!' No attention was paid to him until he repeated the remark in a louder tone, when his father roughly told him not to try and teach his elders. The boy, however, persisted that the horse could be ridden and that he was willing to stake anything that he would ride him there and then. The grooms laughed, but Alexander coolly ran up to Bucephalas, and taking his bridle turned his head to the sun; for he had noticed that it was his own shadow which was making him plunge and rear. Then slipping off his mantle he vaulted on his back, and patting him gently sat still. The horse was at first uneasy, but after a few moments broke into a canter and then into a gallop. When he would have stopped the boy dug his heels into his sides and forced him on, until at last Bucephalas had more than enough, and trotted quietly back to the place where he had started.

We are informed that Philip wept for joy at his son's exploit, and told him that he must seek a kingdom

## HEIR-APPARENT

equal to his powers, for Macedonia could not hold him. The story does not seem very probable, but Philip certainly was sufficiently impressed by the boy's daring to see that it was advisable to get him a tutor of more than ordinary capacity. Fortunately for Alexander and the world such a man was not only available but was known to Philip, and, moreover, ready and willing to undertake the charge. The court physician of Macedonia in the reign of Philip's father Amyntas had been a certain Nicomachus, a native of Stagira, whose son Aristotle left Pella for Athens and there became one of Plato's pupils. On Plato's death in 347 Aristotle migrated to the Troad, and taught there under the protection of Hermias, prince of Atarneus, who was in alliance with Philip. When Hermias was betrayed to the Persians and submitted to death by torture rather than reveal their joint plans, Aristotle married his niece and composed a poem 'Virtue' in his honour. It was therefore only natural for Philip to offer him a refuge in Macedonia, and in return to take advantage of his services as a teacher. A house was given him in the quiet village of Mieza near a temple of the nymphs, where Plutarch four centuries later was shown the stone seat where he used to sit; and here for three years the greatest intellect and the greatest spirit that Greece ever produced lived and studied together.

Aristotle was forty and Alexander was thirteen when their connection began; and the three years at Mieza were as decisive an event in Alexander's life as the three years at Thebes had been in Philip's. To begin

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

with, Aristotle revealed to his pupil the treasures of Greek poetry, Pindar, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and, above all, Homer. Of the *Iliad* he made for him a special transcript which Alexander took with him to Asia, and kept under his pillow in a jewelled casket as the most precious of all his possessions. In Homer the boy found the same spiritual sustenance as Ruskin found in the Bible ; and just as our philosopher was always something of a minor prophet, so Alexander was always living over again the deeds of Achilles.

The son of Olympias needed little encouragement to study romantic literature : Aristotle perhaps rendered him a greater service by pointing out to him some of the wonders of natural science, and by encouraging the interest in medicine, physics, botany, zoology, and geography, which remained with him for the rest of his life. But for a future king the most important training of all is one in the art of government, and this we may be sure was supplied by the future author of the *Ethics* and *Politics*. We have a letter which Alexander wrote later to his old teacher, complaining that he had published for others the knowledge which he had first imparted to himself, knowledge which he considered more valuable than any worldly power. But in his political conceptions Alexander finally went far beyond his preceptor, and although he adopted his dangerous theory that the Overman is superior to all laws, he freed himself from the narrow prejudice against barbarians to which Aristotle always clung.

From Plutarch's description we can picture Alex-

## HEIR-APPARENT

ander at the close of the Mieza period, as he stood on the threshold between youth and manhood. From his father he had inherited a superb constitution, a dauntless courage, and an immense capacity for work : from his mother a vivid imagination, a dæmonic force of will, and a mysterious affinity with the occult. His parents, moreover, were so conscious of each other's faults that they carefully designed his education to correct any similar tendencies on his side. Incontinence and unscrupulousness were his father's besetting sins ; and his mother saw to it that Leonidas should teach him to despise sensual pleasure and to love virtue for itself. An irrational fanaticism and an ungovernable temper were his mother's weaknesses ; and Aristotle, his father's choice, trained him to follow reason's rule and in all things to observe the golden mean. ' My father gave me life,' the young prince said, ' but Aristotle taught me how to live.'

In addition to these advantages of birth and training Nature bestowed on Alexander a body perfectly proportioned and a face of remarkable beauty. His skin was singularly fair and clear with a ruddy glow ; his eyes large and liquid but on occasion flashing fire. A broad forehead and prominent eyebrows corrected the softer lines of mouth and chin ; and he usually carried his head with a slight inclination to the left. Apelles painted his portrait, but with little success : Lysippus was more happy in the statues which he made of him, and in the reliefs which pictured his exploits in battle and the chase. But it is agreed that neither painter nor sculptor could ever adequately

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

represent the impression of godlike beauty which the living Alexander made on all beholders.

In 340 Philip sent for his son to come to Perinthus ; and there the youth behaved with such manly resolution that his father, before marching on Byzantium, sent him back to Pella to act as regent for the rest of his absence. In that capacity Alexander not only carried on the civil business of the state with a skill far beyond his years, but actually engaged in a short campaign against a rebellious Thracian tribe, and after inflicting on them condign punishment, founded in their territory a new city which he called after his own name Alexandropolis, the first of the many Alexandrias which he was destined to establish in many parts of the world. It was probably during the months of his regency that the Persian ambassadors paid the visit to his father's court which is recorded by Plutarch. They brought with them as presents suitable to a young prince a polo stick and a polo ball. But Alexander had no great liking for mere games, and he replied as our King Henry V did in somewhat similar circumstances :

‘ I will in France by God's grace play a set  
That shall strike his father's crown into the hazard.’

‘ This ball,’ said Alexander to the Persians, ‘ is the world, and I am the stick that will move it as it wishes.’ He then proceeded to question the envoys closely about Persia, its roads, distances, government and general condition, and left them slightly bewildered by his precocious intelligence.

## HEIR-APPARENT

In the winter of 340 Philip returned home and spent the next few months nursing his wound and ruminating over the failure of his last expedition. The news of that check had spread through Greece and he felt that he must do something to regain prestige. Whether it was good fortune or his own secret diplomacy that enabled him to do so is uncertain : in any case, some time in the summer of 339 he received request from the Amphictyonic Council that he would bring an army into Greece, and on their behalf chastise the people of Amphissa, who were occupying land sacred to Apollo. He at once marched southwards, passed through Thessaly into central Greece, and then, in order to secure his communications, occupied the town of Elatea.

Elatea is on the main road to Thebes and only three days' march from Athens, and the Athenians regarded Philip's action as a direct threat to themselves. The consternation which prevailed in the city is described by Demosthenes in a well-known passage :<sup>1</sup> ' It was evening when a man came to the Presidents of the Council with the news that Elatea was taken. They got up from dinner at once, drove the people from the market stalls, and set fire to the hurdle pens ; others sent for the generals and called the trumpeter ; and the city was full of confusion. The next morning at daybreak the Presidents summoned the Council to their hall, and you went to the Assembly, and before the Council could introduce or prepare a resolution, the whole people were up in their seats.

<sup>1</sup> Demosthenes, *De Corona*, 169.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

When the Council had entered, and the Presidents had reported the message, and presented the courier, and he had made his statement, the herald asked "Who wishes to speak?" But no one came forward.'

Demosthenes, according to his own account, was the one man of spirit present, and on his urgent advice the Athenians sent an embassy to Thebes proposing an offensive and defensive alliance against the invader. After some hesitation the Thebans agreed on condition that they were given the supreme command and Athens paid two-thirds of the cost; and the rest of 339 was spent in trying to get more support. The Peloponnesian states remained obstinately neutral and Thessaly, together with the Amphictyonic Council, was on Philip's side. But Eubœa, Achæa, Megara and Corcyra all sent contingents to the allied army, and Byzantium undertook to keep the sea open for the corn ships. The spring of 338 passed in trifling skirmishes, but by the summer Philip was ready to strike, and after destroying Amphissa came through the passes into Bœotia where he found the Greeks waiting to give him battle in the plain of Chæronea.

Both sides had about thirty thousand men engaged; but while Philip had a highly trained army with a strong force of cavalry, the Thebans were the only first-class troops among the allies. In the Macedonian army Alexander was given the command of the left wing, which was to deliver the main assault; Philip took the right. The allied front was composed of Thebans on the right, Megarians, Achæans, and mercenaries in the centre, Athenians on the left.

## HEIR-APPARENT

Philip again used the oblique attack, the cavalry Companions on the left wing charging against the Thebans, while Philip on the right by a feigned retreat drew the Athenians from their strong position on the higher ground. His tactics were completely successful, for after a fierce engagement Alexander broke through the Theban Sacred Band of Lovers, who died fighting to the last man, and then rolled up the allied centre, as Philip, suddenly advancing, drove the Athenians in disorder from the field. Contrary to his usual custom, Philip made no attempt at pursuit; and although Thebes was compelled to receive a Macedonian garrison after the battle, Athens was treated with the greatest leniency. Alexander was sent to return the ashes of her dead, all her captured citizens were released without ransom, and retaining her freedom and independence she was allowed to enter into alliance with Macedonia.

Up till this time it would seem that Philip and Alexander had been good friends; but after 338 they began to draw apart. The main reason perhaps was the jealousy which is always latent between a king and his heir. Philip was growing old, Alexander was young and handsome, and after Chæronea he became the idol of the soldiers, who gave to him the main credit for the victory. Moreover, in moral character father and son were at opposite poles. Philip was entirely unscrupulous; Alexander never in his life committed a mean or dishonourable act. Philip was a libertine and openly unfaithful to his wife; Alexander was devoted to his mother and a miracle of continence.



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Sleep and sex, he said, were the two things that reminded him that he was mortal; and he took as little as possible of the one and entirely eschewed the other. To a man of Philip's temperament such chastity doubtless seemed unnatural, and one evening he arranged for a young courtesan to be put secretly in his son's bed. Alexander entered the room, saw the unwelcome visitor, and turning on his heel in disgust slept that night among his men. Olympias would scarcely have thought any girl worthy of her son, and his indifference to women was probably as great a pleasure to her as her husband's wantonness was a grief. But it is plain that Olympias and Alexander both regarded Philip's concubines with the same disgust, and felt a similar resentment against him.

As long as Philip took a different woman every week, and Alexander's position as heir was not threatened, Olympias bore things as best she could. But in 337 the situation altered for the worse, and in that year Philip was seized with a sudden passion for a young woman, Cleopatra, niece of Attalus, who was one of his most trusted commanders, and son-in-law of Parmenio. In this case possession of the lady could only be obtained in one way, and Philip, bluntly telling Olympias to go, prepared for a second marriage. The bridal feast took place with the usual Macedonian accompaniment of heavy drinking, and scarcely a man was sober when Attalus stood up and asked the gods to bless the union and send Philip a legitimate heir to his throne. Alexander at once leaped from his seat and flung a cup in Attalus' face, crying out

## HEIR-APPARENT

‘ You rogue, do you take me then for a bastard ? ’  
The bridegroom for his part attempted to draw his sword and rush upon his son ; but wine and rage and weakness made him totter, and he fell helpless on the floor, while Alexander left the room with a mocking ‘ Look, he wishes to go from Europe to Asia, and he cannot drag himself from one table to another.’

The next day mother and son left Macedonia, Olympias going to Epirus, Alexander to the Illyrians with whom he remained until Philip, on the advice of the Corinthian Demaratus, invited him to return. Alexander consented to come back, but it was not long before a fresh cause of dissension arose. An embassy came to Pella from a certain Pixodarus, Prince of Caria, proposing alliance with Philip. To seal the bargain it was suggested that a Carian princess should marry Philip Arrhidæus, one of Philip’s bastard sons ; and at that Alexander took alarm, and by the agency of the actor Thessalus offered himself to Pixodarus as his son-in-law. Philip discovered the intrigue, perhaps by the information of Philotas, Parmenio’s eldest son, and not only fiercely abused Alexander but also exiled his three chief confidants, Harpalus, Nearchus and Ptolemy son of Lagus.

How far Olympias was behind her son in this affair we do not know ; but she was certainly at this time trying to induce her brother Alexander the Molossian to make war upon Macedonia : and it was Philip’s counter-stroke to her attempts which brought about the final catastrophe. Ever since Chæroneia Philip

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

had been slowly making preparations for a campaign against Persia, and in the autumn of 336, before he left for the East, he decided to detach the Molossian prince from his sister and make him a friend instead of an enemy. He therefore offered him in marriage Cleopatra, daughter of Olympias and sister of Alexander, and when he accepted arranged a great feast at *Ægæ*, the ancient capital of Macedonia, to celebrate both his own approaching departure and also the happy alliance by marriage of Macedonia and Epirus.

The appointed day arrived : the messengers whom Philip had sent to Delphi to ask for an oracle returned with the response 'The bull is crowned and the sacrificer is ready' ; ambassadors from Greece came bringing golden crowns to offer to their Captain-General, and the streets of the old town were thronged with merry-makers. But among the company there was one who bore no goodwill to the king. Pausanias had received a mortal insult from Attalus, and when he begged Philip, whose minion he had been, to avenge his honour, the king had put him off with a jest. For weeks he had waited for an opportunity, and now it came. On the second day of the festival Philip was walking without a guard to the theatre, when Pausanias sprang upon him, and before anyone could interfere plunged a dagger into his heart. The assassin was cut down before he could escape, but the blow had been mortal and Philip lay dead.

The murder of a king, whether it be due to personal or to political motives, is a crime which is rightly regarded with the utmost detestation. But in Philip's

## HEIR-APPARENT

case it was well for every one that he died when he did ; well for Alexander, well for Macedonia, well even for himself. There is reason to believe that he contemplated cutting Alexander out of the succession ; and if he had done so there probably would have been a civil war of the most grievous kind, which would have been equally disastrous to victors and to vanquished. Even his Persian campaign could hardly have been a benefit to the world ; for although he might have overthrown the Persian government, he had not sufficient breadth of vision to establish another, equally efficient, in its place.

## CHAPTER IV

### CAPTAIN-GENERAL OF GREECE

NO man, unless he be an Alexander, is indispensable, and Philip's death made singularly little difference in Macedonia. His work was done ; and although the more sanguine amongst the Greeks expected something startling to happen, the only real result, as Phocion warned the Athenians, was that the Macedonian army was one man short. It is true that there was some confusion in Ægæ at first ; but the army was thoroughly loyal to the victor of Chæronea, and by Macedonian custom, the assembled army decided who should succeed a dead king. Antipater, their senior officer, agreed with the general opinion, and Alexander, who was now twenty, was acclaimed as ruler of Macedonia.

His first step was to punish all those who were suspected of complicity in Philip's murder. The most obvious culprits were the two Lyncestian princes, Arrhabæus and Heromenes, and after Philip had been buried with due ceremony at Ægæ, they were brought to trial and executed. Their brother Alexander, however, who was Antipater's son-in-law, had done homage to Alexander as king immediately after the murder, and he was pardoned. The next thing was to remove all possible pretenders to the throne. Of these there were several. Amyntas, the son of Perdiccas, for

## CAPTAIN-GENERAL OF GREECE

whom Philip had acted as regent before taking the kingship for himself, was regarded by many as the rightful heir, and accordingly had to die. With him went Caranus, a son of Philip by an irregular union, who was a man of some energy, and a potential danger to peace. Finally there was Attalus, his daughter Cleopatra, and the daughter she had just borne to Philip. Attalus was at this time in Asia, in command of the advance guard of the expeditionary force, and had already entered into negotiations with Demosthenes against his new king. Proofs of his treason soon came to light, and he was put to death together with all the male members of his family ; while Olympias, on her own initiative and without her son's knowledge, took the opportunity to murder Cleopatra and her young child.

The Macedonian army, as we have said, had given Alexander its willing allegiance at once ; but although the Greek states were equally bound in honour to support him, they preferred to break the compact which they had made. The situation was as follows. In the late autumn of 338, after the battle of Chæronea, Philip had called a Conference of all the Greek cities at Corinth, and there proposed to them a permanent league and alliance. To this League of the Hellenes each state was to send deputies, the meetings taking place at the four great festivals, Olympian, Pythian, Nemean, Isthmian, while a permanent committee of five sat at Corinth. Freedom and autonomy were guaranteed to every state ; the forces of the League were to protect the independence of each member,

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

and there was to be no violent interference with private property. No tribute was to be exacted, nor any garrisons planted in the cities except where the military interests of the League rendered it advisable, and in all judicial matters the Amphictyonic Council was to act as supreme court. Any citizen of a state belonging to the League who took service with a foreign power was to be considered a traitor and punished by banishment and the confiscation of his goods. Macedonia itself stood outside the League, but its king was to be *Hegemon*, Captain-General of the joint Greek and Macedonian army, in case of a war being made on either Greece or Macedonia, or an offensive campaign against another country becoming necessary.<sup>1</sup>

The Spartans refused even to attend the conference ; but the other Greek delegates, after some debate, accepted the plan and took a solemn oath of fidelity to Philip and to his descendants. It remained to give the League some definite work to undertake, and this was found by Philip in a skilful adaptation of the Panhellenic idea which the veteran publicist Isocrates had first put forward in the *Panegyricus*, written in 380, and later under a slightly different form in the *Philip*, which was published in 346, just after the Peace of Philocrates. In this second pamphlet, composed when he was ninety years old, Isocrates suggested that Philip, as descendant of Heracles, should first bring together the four leading Greek states, Athens, Sparta, Thebes

<sup>1</sup> A comparison between this scheme and our League of Nations may be left to the reader.

## CAPTAIN-GENERAL OF GREECE

and Argos, with all of which Heracles had been connected, and establish a permanent peace among them by forbidding any war by one upon another and also any attempt by individuals to subvert the existing constitution of their state. He then was to come forward as leader of the Greeks in a war against Persia, even as Heracles had once taken Troy, and deliver Greece from the foreign yoke laid upon it by the Peace of Antalcidas in 386. The Greek cities in Asia were to be set free again, new Greek colonies established for landless men in Asia, and the wealth of the East used to relieve the economic distress from which Greece was then so sorely suffering.

Isocrates was a typical Athenian, ingenious, eloquent, and full of ideas, but somewhat lacking in a sense of reality. He never saw the necessity of uniting the Greeks into one nation if they were to resist foreign rule, and he never contemplated the possibility of a Macedonian dominion over Greece. Accordingly Philip used his main idea but gave it a different complexion. He did not reveal his true purpose of making Macedonia supreme, but suggested a religious war of vengeance against Persia for the desecration of the Greek temples by Xerxes in 480. In the early summer of 337 he called the first meeting of the League Council to consider his proposal: the Council voted in favour and the next spring Philip took the first step in active operations by sending Attalus and Parmenio with ten thousand men across the Dardanelles. And then in the midsummer of 336 came his death.

Ostensibly Philip was the champion of Greece



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

against Persia : but at Athens the news of his death was received with an outburst of joy. Offerings were made to the gods, and a vote of thanks was passed to the assassin, and Demosthenes, appearing with a festive garland on his head, assured the people that Alexander was a mere braggart whom no man need fear. By decree of the Athenian assembly the king of Macedonia was deposed from his position as Captain-General of the League, and the Athenians, who had at last introduced a practical system in military and financial matters, prepared once again for war. Athens led the way and the rest of Greece followed. Ætolia recalled the exiles whom Philip had banished as disturbers of the peace ; Ambracia expelled the Macedonian garrison to which the League had consented ; Thebes and the cities of the Peloponnese made ready to revolt ; and even in Thessaly, which had been Philip's firmest supporter, the anti-Macedonian party for a time gained the upper hand.

The moment had come for Alexander to show the Greeks what sort of ruler it was with whom they had now to deal. Marching southwards at full speed, he entered Thessaly, and when the Thessalians bade him wait outside the pass of Tempe while they considered whether they would admit him, he merely turned aside and scaled the steep slopes of Mount Ossa, on which the giants had once piled Pelion to climb to heaven. His soldiers cut steps on the sea face of the mountain and clambering along like goats with the waves surging beneath them, appeared on the further side of the pass before the Thessalians

## CAPTAIN-GENERAL OF GREECE

had even guessed what they were doing. Resistance at once collapsed ; the Thessalians elected the new king in his father's place as head of their federation, and put their strong force of cavalry at his disposal in the event of his deciding to take measures against Athens. The other northern states also surrendered, and after occupying the pass of Thermopylæ, Alexander called a meeting of the Amphictyonic Council and from it received full recognition as Captain-General of the League. He then sent an ultimatum to Thebes and Athens, offering them the choice between war and submission, and both cities hastily chose the second alternative.

The Peloponnesian states had still not formally recognized Alexander as successor to his father's position in Greek affairs, and a meeting of all the League cities was accordingly summoned in the autumn of 336 at Corinth, where the existing treaty was renewed, the name of Alexander being substituted for that of Philip. This instrument was signed by delegates from all the Greek cities except Sparta, which still obstinately refused to join with the others or acknowledge any outside authority, declaring that it was her ancestral custom to lead rather than to be led. For the moment she was allowed to go her own way, and Alexander contented himself with the honours which the other states showered upon him. The Athenians were especially obsequious, and during his stay at Corinth a throng of suppliants for his favour followed him everywhere. One day he was passing through the market-place when he noticed a man

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

sitting inside a large earthen cask. He asked his name and was told that he was the cynic Diogenes, the great apostle of self-sufficiency, the art of doing without. Alexander stopped and inquired of the philosopher if there was anything he desired. 'Yes,' replied Diogenes, 'move out of the sunlight.' 'By God,' said the king to his attendants, 'if I were not Alexander, I would wish to be Diogenes.'

Time pressed, however, and after paying a visit to Delphi and consulting the oracle there, Alexander returned to his own country to secure the northern frontier before he started on the great expedition in Asia. The Illyrians and the Thracians near by, the Getæ and the Scythians in the further north, had never been completely subdued and were now only waiting for an opportunity to come down and ravage Macedonia. Until they were crushed and a safe frontier established on the Danube it was obviously impossible to take the army far away. Moreover the Triballi, who had attacked and wounded Philip on his return march from Byzantium in 339, had not yet been punished for their insolence; and they, like the other Thracian tribes, were brigands whom even brigands feared. A regular campaign against all these barbarians was indicated; and Alexander in spite of his youth and inexperience not only undertook it without any help from Philip's marshals, Antipater and Parmenio, but in it showed all the qualities of a great general.

His plans were carefully laid, and before he left Amphipolis in the spring of 335, he had given orders

## CAPTAIN-GENERAL OF GREECE

for a fleet to sail from Byzantium into the Black Sea and thence up the Danube to a spot where his army was to join them. Marching eastwards along the coast he turned Mt. Rhodope and went north past Philippopolis, his father's foundation, until he reached Hæmus. To get across the mountain range he probably took the Shipka Pass, where the Russians fought the Turks in 1877 ; but before he had gone far he found it strongly occupied by the hill tribesmen who had collected heavy waggons on the heights and were waiting to send them down on his advancing column. Alexander saw the danger in time, and ordered the infantry either to open their ranks when the waggons came down, or, if that were impossible, to lie flat on the ground beneath their shields. His men carried out both manœuvres perfectly, and the waggons either hurtled through the empty space or else rattled over the metal shields until they broke on the rocks. Against the heavy-armed Macedonians in close fighting the barbarians had no chance, and after losing fifteen hundred men they fled in disorder leaving their wives, children, and cattle as booty for the victors.

The turn of the Triballi came next. Anticipating danger they had sent their women back to the island of Peuke in the Danube, and as Alexander advanced they endeavoured to get round his column and so cut off his retreat. But here again Alexander saw through their plan, and turning quickly fell upon them just as they were preparing to encamp. A fierce battle followed in which Alexander took command of the phalanx and Philotas led the heavy cavalry.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

The Triballi fought bravely ; but a cavalry charge on their flank, timed to correspond with the advance of the phalanx, settled the issue, and their retreat left the road to the Danube open. After three days' marching the great river was reached, close to the island where the enemy had taken refuge, and here also Alexander found his Byzantine ships awaiting him. He had achieved his object ; but as the matter-of-fact Arrian says in a strange phrase<sup>1</sup> ' a yearning seized him to pass to the other side of the Danube,' the Greek word implying a desire for something which he had done before, perhaps in a previous existence.

There was, however, as we shall often find in Alexander's career, a practical as well as a mystical reason for this desire. On the northern bank of the Danube a strong force of Getæ had collected to prevent his passage, and their presence was a challenge which Alexander was not the man to refuse. The river was very broad and ran swiftly beneath steep banks, and boats were scarce and small. Still, by various devices he got four thousand infantry and fifteen hundred cavalry across under cover of darkness, and in the morning at their head crept quietly through high fields of corn and took the Getæ completely by surprise. His daring seemed to them so incredible that they scarcely made any resistance, but mounting their horses fled in terror to their native steppes. Alexander thereupon set up an altar on the northern bank, and after sacrificing to Zeus, Heracles and the

<sup>1</sup> Arrian, *Anabasis*, I, iii. 5.

## CAPTAIN-GENERAL OF GREECE

river god, recrossed the river without the loss of a man.

Like so many of Alexander's exploits, this hazardous adventure was fully justified by its results. Barbarians above all people are impressed by successful daring, and not only did the Triballi at once submit, but even the distant Celts on the upper Danube sent an embassy offering friendship and alliance. These Celts, as Arrian says, were tall men and tall talkers, and the form of their oath was used by the Irish a thousand years later—'We will keep faith unless the sky fall and crush us, or the earth open and swallow us, or the sea rise and overwhelm us.' Alexander asked them what it was that they feared most, hoping that they would say himself, and was somewhat disappointed when they said it was the first of their three alternatives. Still, he made a treaty of friendship with them and sent them home, casually remarking 'What boasters these Celts are'; and for the next fifty years the Celts kept quiet.

But although the Celts were friendly and the Triballi subdued, there were dangers in the north which Alexander had yet to face. The Illyrian king Cleitus, son of a charcoal-burner, had taken up arms against him and was joined by Glaucias, prince of the Taulantians. Their united forces seized the strong fortress of Pellion, which commanded the road into Macedonia, and they then persuaded another tribe, the Autoriates, to harass Alexander on his march. These last, however, were kept in check by the faithful Agrianians, and Alexander forced his way southwards

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

to Pellion. At his approach Cleitus sacrificed three boys, three girls and three black rams to ensure himself the victory, and then retired behind the strong walls of the fort. Alexander tried in vain to take the place by storm, and for a time was in an extremely dangerous position, hemmed in the valley with the untaken fortress in front and the Taulantians behind in command of all the surrounding hills. At last by a brilliant manœuvre, which only the most highly trained soldiers could have executed, he drove the Taulantians from the position, and a few nights later took the Illyrians by surprise. Cleitus set the fort on fire, and in the confusion escaped ; and so the fighting ended.

It was indeed time to get free from these northern entanglements, for all Greece was again in a turmoil. The king of Persia, whose troops had now come into contact with the Macedonian advance guard in Asia, had thought it expedient to use once more the well-tried method of bribing the Greeks, and sent envoys with a large amount of money to stir up a revolt. Sparta alone took his gold ; but although Athens publicly refused it, Demosthenes accepted seventy-five thousand pounds to use as he thought fit. By a judicious employment of this sum he soon roused a strong patriotic feeling, and when he brought forward a man who showed a wound received in the battle against the Triballi where Alexander had been killed before his eyes, excitement rose to fever heat. Even moderate men like Lycurgus considered that by Alexander's death Athens was automatically

## CAPTAIN-GENERAL OF GREECE

released from her alliance with Macedonia, and the only question at issue was what had best be done.

The Athenians answered that question by doing nothing themselves, while they extended an active sympathy to those states who were prepared openly to revolt. In Athens there were a number of Theban exiles, whom Demosthenes supplied with arms and money ; and these men one night set out for Thebes. Friends were waiting to admit them : two Macedonian officers were lured down from the citadel and promptly murdered ; and the mass of the people, assured once more that Alexander was dead, rushed to arms and closely invested the Macedonian garrison. At the news the Arcadians and the Ætolians also rose, and when ambassadors from Thebes appeared at Corinth, where Antipater had sent envoys to remind the League states of their treaty obligations, they were received with much greater favour than was shown to the Macedonians. In short, to Demosthenes and to many others everything now seemed ripe for an attempt to shake off the Macedonian yoke, and this time surely the attempt would be successful.

Suddenly there came the unpleasant news that a Macedonian army, marching twenty miles a day, was speeding southwards into Greece. The Thebans were told at first that its commander was only Antipater ; and then, that if it was an Alexander, it was only the young king's namesake the Lyncestian. They soon learned the truth. Thirteen days after taking Pellion Alexander in person appeared before their



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

walls as Captain-General of the League, and was at once joined by contingents from Phocis and Platæa, members of the League and bitterly hostile to Thebes. Even then a peaceful issue was possible ; but when Alexander proposed terms, the Thebans replied by attacking his outposts. A second offer was met by sending a herald to the city wall who proclaimed that all who wished to free Greece from the tyrant should join Thebes and the Persian king. At this Alexander lost patience ; but he had not actually given the order to attack, when a Macedonian regiment rushed forward to relieve their beleaguered comrades in the citadel. As they were repulsed, Alexander was compelled to come to their help ; the Electra gate was forced, and the Thebans, fighting madly, were driven back to the centre of the city and there massacred.

The guilt of Thebes was manifest and far more flagrant than that of any other of the Greek states ; for they at least had the excuse of their belief in Alexander's death, while Thebes had openly defied and insulted him. Her punishment was left to the decision of the League Council, specially summoned for the purpose, and the Council decreed that Thebes should be razed to the ground, her territory divided among the other Bæotian cities, and her women and children sold into slavery. Alexander could have interfered and he certainly afterwards felt some remorse, attributing the two greatest sorrows of his life to the anger of Dionysus, son of the Theban woman Semele. But clemency is often dangerous,

## CAPTAIN-GENERAL OF GREECE

and one example at least of severity was needed in Greece if there were to be no more revolts. The other states escaped punishment of any kind, and although Alexander at first demanded that the Athenians should exile his most bitter opponents, including Demosthenes, he afterwards relented and was satisfied with the banishment of one worthless politician named Charidemus.

So peace was restored among the Greeks, and when Alexander returned to Macedonia in the autumn of 335 he recalled Parmenio from Asia, and began his own preparations for the great expedition. These lasted all through the winter, and before he left Europe he had a difficult question to decide. There were three persons whose position had carefully to be considered, his father's two marshals Antipater and Parmenio, and his mother Olympias. These three thought themselves fully competent to advise him on every detail of government, and to have taken them with him would have been to invite constant interference. On the other hand filial piety prevented him leaving all three behind, for the two old generals were bitterly hostile to Olympias; and one woman, even if that woman was his mother, was scarcely able to hold her own against two men. He solved the difficulty with the common sense which he had displayed at the time when Aristotle asked his pupils what they would do in certain conditions. The other boys gave various replies but Alexander said that he would prefer to wait until the occasion arose.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

On this occasion he decided to take Parmenio with him, making the mental proviso that he would only follow the old man's advice when it accorded with his own ideas. Antipater he left behind as regent, with Olympias to keep him in check ; and consequently during all his Asiatic campaigns he would get reports from both sides. Antipater would write complaining bitterly of Olympias and her constant interference : Alexander would remark to Hephæstion that the marshal did not understand that one of his mother's tears blotted out the whole dispatch. Olympias would write reproaching her son with his kindness to unworthy subjects, and Alexander would allow Hephæstion to read her letter, and then put his signet ring to his lips. As long as Alexander lived Olympias always came first ; but after his death Cassander, Antipater's son, took revenge for his father, and Olympias perished at his hands.

In the spring of 334 all was ready and Alexander crossed the Dardanelles into Asia. He had with him an army of about thirty thousand foot and something over five thousand horse. In the cavalry the *corps d'élite* was the Companions, some two thousand strong divided into eight squadrons, the whole body under the command of Parmenio's eldest son Philotas : after them came the eighteen hundred Thessalian horse under Calas, and some smaller detachments of mounted Thracians and Pæonians. Of the infantry twelve thousand were trained Macedonian soldiers ; nine thousand in the six regiments of the phalanx under Craterus, Perdiccas, Cœnus, Amyntas, Meleager and

## CAPTAIN-GENERAL OF GREECE

Polysperchon, three thousand in the foot-guards under Parmenio's second son Nicanor. There were also twelve thousand Greeks, either hoplites from the League cities or mercenary peltasts: the rest of the foot were Agrianian javelin-men, Cretan archers, and light-armed Thracians. The League troops were chiefly used for garrison duty and on lines of communication, and it was from them probably that the settlers were drawn whom Alexander left in the cities which he founded in the Far East, for the Greeks were always better colonists than they were soldiers.

The army was certainly the finest fighting force as yet produced, and its officers, although in Alexander's lifetime they were overshadowed by his marvellous personality, were also a very remarkable body of men. Some of them we have already mentioned; but amongst the others there were four who, after Alexander's death, won great kingdoms for themselves. There was Antigonus, the One Eyed, whose son Demetrius came nearest in genius to Alexander, and whose descendants ruled in Macedonia until the battle of Pydna in 168. There was Lysimachus, afterwards king of Thrace, and Seleucus, founder of the Seleucid dynasty in Syria, to whose line belonged Antiochus Epiphanes and Antiochus the Great. There was Ptolemy, son of Lagos, of the hooked nose and the subtle mind, who had the wit to see that Egypt was the prize of Alexander's empire and took it at once for his own. Ptolemy was one of Alexander's boyhood friends; another was the Cretan Nearchus who made

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

the wonderful voyage from India to the mouth of the Euphrates ; another was Cleitus who as a child was reared in the same nursery with his king ; another was Harpalus ‘ Robber ’ of ominous name, who later was to betray his trust ; last and far dearest of all, Hephæstion, who loved Alexander for himself alone and not because he was king.

Of all these the lame Harpalus was the only one who held no military office, but there were also many civilians who were attached to the army in various positions. Eumenes of Cardia, for example, was Alexander’s chief secretary and wrote daily the official record of operations. Callisthenes of Olynthus, nephew of Alexander, appointed himself as literary historian of the expedition. Anaxarchus and his pupil Pyrrhon, founder of the Sceptic school, were professional philosophers and performed some of the functions of our army chaplains, while another department of religious ceremony was under the charge of Aristander as chief soothsayer. More actually useful, perhaps, were the engineers, whose chief was Demades, and the road surveyors who collected information about routes and recorded the distances marched. And lastly there was the commissariat staff, who, though we hear little of them, must not be left unnoticed.

This was the army and these the officers with which Alexander left Macedonia which he was never to see again. Before he went he made generous grants of the royal domain land to those of his nobles who remained behind, as a compensation for having no

## CAPTAIN-GENERAL OF GREECE

share in the spoils of Asia. His mother was annoyed and told him he was acting foolishly, and one of the recipients even ventured to ask him what he was leaving for himself. Alexander replied, 'My hopes.'

## CHAPTER V

### THE INVASION OF ASIA : FIRST PHASE

**I**N 334 B.C. the Persian Empire was the greatest power that the world had as yet seen. Egypt at the height of her prosperity, 1479-1375 B.C., was only mistress of the Nile valley together with Syria and Asia Minor as far as the Taurus and the Euphrates. The Hittites took her place in Syria and Asia Minor after 1360 B.C., and they in turn were overthrown by the Assyrians whose great king Sennacherib (705-681) made Nineveh the capital of all Western Asia. But Nineveh itself was destroyed by a coalition of Chaldeans and Medes in 612 B.C., and the Jewish prophet Nahum could cry exultantly,<sup>1</sup> 'Where now is the dwelling of the lions, and the feeding place of the young lions? Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will burn thy chariots in the smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young lions: and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard.'

After 612 the rule of Western Asia fell for a short time into the hands of the Chaldeans, who under Nebuchadnezzar rebuilt Babylon and gave their name to the Mesopotamian lands. But they were destined to be the last Semitic empire, for a hardier race, a

<sup>1</sup> Nahum, II. 11-13.

## INVASION OF ASIA : FIRST PHASE

branch of the Nordic peoples now appeared on the scene. They called themselves Iran, and their two chief divisions bore the name of Medes and Persians. When they separated from the other migrants, who went southwards into India, they at first took up their home on the great Iranian plateau, south of the Caspian Sea and west of the Indus River ; and among them, about 1000 B.C., there arose a great teacher, Zoroaster, who taught that in this world there are two principles, the spirit of Good, Ahura-mazda, and the spirit of Evil, Ahriman. On one side or the other every man must take his stand, and in the next world he will be judged according to his conduct here. If he has served God by good thoughts and good deeds, he will be rewarded ; if he takes Satan for his guide he will be punished.

Inspired by this, the noblest of all ancient religions, the Medes after the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C. made themselves masters of all the mountainous land that runs northward from the Persian Gulf towards the Black Sea. The Persian tribes in the southern part of this district at first acknowledged the Medes as their over-lords, but about 560 B.C. one of their chiefs, named Cyrus, united all his people into one nation, and with an army of horsemen and archers, fighting in Assyrian fashion, started upon a career of conquest which was destined to have the most far-reaching results. The Medes gave way at once, and were admitted as partners in the new empire : Chaldea, Egypt, and Lydia under King Cræsus combined to resist him, but were rendered powerless by the speed



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

of his advance. Sardis, the Lydian capital fell into his hands in 546, and with it all the Greek cities on the southern coasts of Asia Minor ; and seven years later he entered Babylon without opposition and dethroned Belshazzar, the last of the Chaldean kings. In 528 he was killed in battle, fighting against the nomad tribes of the north ; but his son Cambyses completed his work by adding Egypt to the Persian dominions.

Cambyses only reigned for a few years and was succeeded, after a short interregnum, in 521 by one of the greatest rulers in history, Darius I, son of Hystaspes (521-485). Cyrus had founded the Persian Empire, Darius achieved the even more difficult task of giving it a permanent organization. The countries under his rule stretched from the Indus River to the Red Sea, from the Indian Ocean to the steppes about the Caspian ; and they were inhabited by peoples of varying race, religion, language, and culture. The problem was how to bring all this vast area under one system of government, and this Darius solved by establishing an autocracy, with the Persian and Median nobles as the autocrat's trusted subordinates. In this government the subject nations had no voice ; but they were allowed to keep their national customs and religion, for the Persians never tried to make proselytes, and as long as they paid their fixed tribute and supplied their quota of men to the Persian army, they were permitted a certain amount of local autonomy.

The Great King kept Egypt and Babylonia in his own hands. The rest of the empire was divided into

## INVASION OF ASIA : FIRST PHASE

twenty provinces, each one under a governor, called in Persian Kshatrapavan—protector of the country—a word which the Greeks simplified to satrapes, our satrap. The satraps were allowed to raise troops and to coin silver money, but they were kept in check by royal officials, known as the King's Eyes or the King's Ears, whose duty it was to report any sign of insubordination or misgovernment. Between the different provinces and the king's palaces at Babylon, Susa, and Persepolis, communication was secured by a system of royal roads almost as elaborate as that of the Roman Empire ; and although the Persians themselves were landsmen, Darius made full use of the seafaring skill of his Phœnician and Greek subjects.

The system which Darius established gave peace and prosperity to Asia for nearly two centuries : the old Egyptian canal from the Nile to the Red Sea was restored, and the Greek sailor Scylax at his master's orders made the voyage from the Euphrates to the Indus : trade with the Far East flourished, and it was at this time that our barn-door fowl were first brought from India. But after the Scythian expedition of Darius in 575, which gave him the command of the land route into Greece, the Persian Empire ceased to grow ; and, like the Roman Empire, ceasing to grow it began slowly to decay. For an autocracy to be completely successful a succession of competent autocrats is needed, and the four kings who followed after Darius, in the period between 485 and 359 B.C., Xerxes, Artaxerxes I, Darius II, and Artaxerxes II, were none of them men of very great ability. They

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

chose to keep Greece in check by fostering enmity between the city states and supporting now one and now another with Persian gold, while they came more and more to use Greek soldiers in any expedition which they undertook. The result of this policy was seen in 401 B.C., when Cyrus, son of Queen Parysatis, almost succeeded in overthrowing his brother Artaxerxes by the help of Greek mercenaries, who after the Battle of Cunaxa marched for many hundreds of miles through Persian territory and finally forced their way out to the Black Sea. The revolt of Egypt and the campaigns of the Spartan king Agesilaus in Asia Minor (396-394 B.C.) were further proofs of Persian weakness, and at the death of Artaxerxes in 359 it seemed as if the empire was in full decadence.

The next king, however, Artaxerxes III, was a ruler of very different character from his four predecessors, a despot of the true Asiatic type, subtle, cruel, energetic and voluptuous. He began by making an example of two insubordinate satraps, Orontes and Artabazus, and then proceeded to reconquer Egypt, which for sixty years had been separated from the empire. His Egyptian campaign was brilliantly successful, and by 344 B.C. he was not only master once again of the Nile valley but he had also brought the Phœnician coast cities, which had shown signs of restlessness, completely to heel. For the rest of his reign he left the civil government in the skilful hands of the Egyptian eunuch, Bagoas, while Memnon and Mentor, two Greek soldiers of fortune from Rhodes brought the army into something like its old efficiency.

## INVASION OF ASIA : FIRST PHASE

He was extremely unpopular with the Persian nobles, to whom he showed little favour ; but when Darius Codomannus succeeded him in 336 B.C. the Persian Empire was in outward appearance far stronger than it had been for many generations.

This, then, was the mighty power which Alexander had the temerity to challenge on its own soil. It was a great adventure, and in it the young leader had to depend entirely upon himself and his small army. The command of the sea was in Persian hands, for Macedonia had never possessed a navy, and the fleet supplied by his Athenian allies was so inferior in strength to the Phœnician and Cypriot ships in the Persian service that during the early stages of the campaign he could make no use of it. As for money, the sinews of war, we are told by one authority that he was over a quarter of a million in debt when he crossed into Asia, and by another that he had only £17,000 in cash to pay his men, and provisions for one month. The Persian king for his part had the levies of all Asia to draw upon for his army, a well-trained fleet of four hundred ships, and the immense treasure in gold and silver which had been accumulating ever since the reign of Darius I.

But these advantages on the Persian side were more than counterbalanced by the power of personality and by the difference of character in the two leaders. Alexander was what he was : Darius was weak in council and timid in battle, and in his feeble hands all the might of Persia proved useless. From the very beginning of the campaign the Persian supreme com-

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

mand showed itself supremely incompetent. It would have been easy to prevent Alexander from crossing the Dardanelles, or at least to have inflicted very considerable losses on him during the operation. But when the Phœnician ships were wanted they were not there. No opposition was offered when Alexander requisitioned all the merchant ships along the coast to ferry his men across ; and the whole business was so easy and unexciting that he left it to Parmenio, and himself went on in advance.

So for a brief space, while his army was making the passage, he was able to indulge his romantic temper to the full. Before he crossed the straits he paid a visit of respect to the mound which marked the resting place of Protesilaus, the Greek who was the first man in Agamemnon's host to leap ashore, remembering perhaps the strange legend to which Wordsworth refers in the last lines of the *Laodamia* :

‘ Upon the side  
Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)  
A knot of spiry trees for ages grew  
From out the tomb of him for whom she died ;  
And ever, when such stature they had gained  
That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,  
The trees' tall summits withered at the sight ;  
A constant interchange of growth and blight ! ’

This done, he took ship, ordering his galley to stop in mid-channel while he sacrificed to Poseidon and poured a libation to the Nereids ; and then, as he drew near the further shore, he leaped into the shallows,

## INVASION OF ASIA : FIRST PHASE

and hurling his spear cried out that he received Asia from the gods as his spear-won prize.

In this fashion it was that he set foot upon the land which was hallowed to him by memories of the Iliad ; and he doubtless felt much the same emotion as pilgrims in the Middle Ages felt at their first sight of the Eternal City. He himself began by a pilgrimage to the tombs of the illustrious dead, the tomb of Ajax, the tomb of Hector, the tomb of Priam ; above all to the two barrows, large and small, beneath which lay the bodies of Achilles and Patroclus. With his own hand he placed a wreath upon the funeral stele of his great ancestor, Hephæstion, paying a like honour to Patroclus ; and then stripping himself of his armour he ran naked round the mound while a band of his Thessalian horsemen charged in mimic warfare over the plain.

By this time the army was ready to advance ; but homage had still to be paid to the sacred soil of Troy. A review of all the troops was first held, and then at their head Alexander marched to the little town of New Ilium, which was supposed to stand upon the site of the ancient city. It was then little more than a village, but its one small temple was still the shrine of Athene Polias, whose Palladium had guarded the citadel of Pergamum, and in it was the altar of Zeus before which Priam had been cut down by the sword of Neoptolemus. The soothsayer Aristander declared that a sacrifice must be made to appease the shade of the dead king, and when this had been done announced that the offering was accepted and Athene

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

herself would lead the army to victory. Thereupon Alexander dedicated his armour to the goddess, and took from her temple in return an ancient shield possessed of mysterious power. This was carried before him in all his battles, and by it in India, when he made his rash attack on the Malloi, his life was saved.

All the duties imposed by pious memory had now been performed, and Alexander, putting aside the dreams of the past, boldly faced the realities of actual warfare. The hinterland of Asia Minor was divided into large estates occupied by Persian nobles who usually had numbers of well-armed mounted retainers. Of these the satraps of the coast provinces now called a general levy and marched northwards to give the Macedonians battle, and if possible to nip the invasion in the bud by killing Alexander before he could do much damage. At Zeleia, not far from the Sea of Marmora, they halted and were there joined by a force of Greek mercenaries under Memnon, the late king's military adviser. A council of war was held, at which Memnon proposed that they should lay waste the country, and retire eastwards to join Darius and the main Persian army, leaving Alexander to find provisions as best he could. Memnon was an experienced soldier, and his plan offered many advantages ; but it was indignantly rejected by the satraps, who declared that they would not allow a single Persian homestead to be burned. Alexander meanwhile was cautiously advancing towards them, and early in May the two armies met on the little river Granicus, just

## INVASION OF ASIA : FIRST PHASE

where the road from the Sea of Marmora to Broussa now crosses the stream.

The Persians massed their cavalry in the front line on the steep river banks with the Greek infantry under Memnon behind them, and waited for the enemy to cross. Parmenio advised caution, but Alexander was no more to be checked by the Granicus than Achilles had been by the Scamander. His men were ordered to change from marching column into line of battle as they came up, and he gave the signal by trumpet for an immediate attack. Parmenio was on the left, the phalanx in the centre, Alexander with the Companions and the Agrianians on the right. On this occasion, however, he did not himself attack the Persians on their extreme left wing, as they had expected, but turning charged against their left centre, while Parmenio's horse and his own light-armed troops held the two Persian wings in check. The main battle therefore was between two bodies of cavalry in the middle of the line and Alexander himself was in the thickest of the fray. Distinguished by his gleaming shield and the white wings upon his helmet, he was an easy mark for the band of Persian nobles who had sworn to slay him or die. One spear he broke in killing Mithridates, son-in-law of Darius : he called to his squire for another, but his also had lost its point, and Demaratus was only just in time to give him his own weapon when Rhæsaces and Spithridates rode down upon him from opposite directions. Rhæsaces he saw, and although his helmet was shattered by the Persian's sword, he pierced him through the body :



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Spithridates from behind with raised scimitar was about to deal a blow which must have been fatal when Cleitus cut off his uplifted arm and saved his leader's life.

During this mellay the Macedonian infantry in the centre had clambered up the eight-foot slope of the river bank and advanced to the attack while Parmenio's Thessalian cavalry on the left had also proved too strong for their opponents. The Persians retired in disorder, leaving the Greek mercenaries unsupported, and while the Macedonian phalanx attacked them in front, the cavalry came down on both flanks. Resistance was impossible, and although some of course were killed and a few with Memnon made their escape, the two thousand prisoners taken composed probably the greater part of the force. On Alexander's side the losses were small, although twenty-five of the Companions were killed, their statues by Lysippus being afterwards set up in Macedonia. The Persians suffered more severely, and after the battle Alexander sent three hundred sets of Persian armour to the Parthenon at Athens with the following inscription : ' Alexander son of Philip and the Hellenes—save the Lacedæmonians—offered this spoil, taken from the barbarians of Asia.' This he did in his capacity of Captain-General of Greece, and in accordance with the same Panhellenic idea the two thousand Greek mercenaries were regarded as traitors to the national cause and sent in chains to the mines at Macedonia.

If we merely consider the number of troops engaged the battle of the Granicus was only a skirmish : but

## INVASION OF ASIA : FIRST PHASE

its results were of considerable importance. After his victory Alexander held himself to be master of Asia Minor, and stepped at once into the place which the Great King had occupied there. He appointed two of his own men, Calas and Asander, as governors of the two provinces of Phrygia and Lydia, but they kept the title of satrap and little change at first was made in the Persian system of government: he took the royal lands as his own property, and the same tribute which had been paid to Darius was now paid to Alexander. Gradually also his attitude both to the Macedonians and the Greeks changed, and he began to see that he was not only the king of a small nation intent on plunder and the champion of Hellas against Persia, but that it was his destiny to spread Greek civilization to the farthest ends of the earth. Such alterations then as he did introduce were all in the direction of freedom. Sardis, the capital of the old Lydian kingdom, which had existed long before the Persians appeared, and played a great part in early Greek history, willingly opened her gates to him, and her people received back their old laws, while on the citadel a new temple of Zeus was built to show that the Olympians were once more the gods of the country.

From the interior he marched down to the coast to liberate the Greek cities. But there he found greater difficulty. In every city there was a strong body of democrats anxious to welcome him, but the oligarchs and tyrants to whom the Persians had entrusted the government, were, like most Greeks, inclined to put party before nation, and preferred their

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

old master to one whom they knew would overthrow their authority. His first destination was Ephesus, where the tyrant Syrophax, assisted by Memnon, was making ready for resistance, when the people rose and stoned him to death. Memnon fled once more, but Alexander's entry stopped the general massacre of the tyrant's supporters which had begun. To his honour Alexander at once proclaimed a general amnesty, ordered the recall of all political exiles, and after setting up a democratic government, enacted that the tribute hitherto paid to Persia should now be paid to the temple of Artemis. According to one story, he also offered to enlarge the building if his name was inscribed upon the frieze ; but the Ephesians escaped from the difficulty by telling him that it was not fit for a god to consecrate a temple to a mere goddess. His portrait by Apelles, however, representing him with the thunderbolt of Zeus in his hand, was placed in the shrine, and was for many years one of its chief ornaments.

From Ephesus Parmenio was sent to occupy Tralles and Magnesia, which had voluntarily submitted, and another force dispatched to establish democracies in the Æolian cities towards the north, while Alexander himself with his main army set out for Miletus. That great mercantile city, centre of the trade between the East and the countries of the Western Mediterranean, had been allowed a considerable measure of freedom by the Persian kings, and, well satisfied with its lot, was anxious to remain neutral. But Alexander knew that it could not prevent the four hundred

## INVASION OF ASIA : FIRST PHASE

Phœnician galleys, then sailing northwards, from using its harbour, even if it wished, and he demanded its surrender. At first the commander of the Greek mercenaries who held the town for Persia was inclined to yield. But when he heard that help was coming to him by sea, he closed the gates and Alexander was forced to begin a regular siege. Fortunately his Greek allies with one hundred and sixty ships were in the adjacent waters, and they were able to sail in and block the entrance to the harbour at Lade, so that when at last the Phœnicians did arrive on the scene, they were compelled to anchor under the shelter of Cape Mycale, three miles away and could do nothing to help the city. Alexander then brought up his battering-rams and breached the walls ; and as soon as his soldiers entered, the Greek mercenaries fled to a small island near by and the citizens surrendered.

The Persian fleet, however, still threatened danger ; and this difficulty Alexander settled in a manner peculiarly his own. Parmenio wished to take command of the allied ships and engage the vastly superior Persian force ; but on this occasion it was the younger man who insisted on caution. He did not intend to risk a defeat for which he himself would not be responsible, and he had already conceived the plan of countering the Persian command of the sea by marching along the whole coast of the Eastern Mediterranean and depriving their navy of all its bases. He therefore disbanded the allied fleet, which was a heavy charge on his treasury, admitted Miletus as a member of the League of Corinth, and showed how far his policy had

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

changed since the Granicus by not only pardoning its garrison of Greek mercenaries but enrolling them as soldiers in his own army.

All the coast towns were now in his hands except Halicarnassus, where the ubiquitous Memnon had taken command for the Persians; and so to Halicarnassus Alexander went next. Caria, of which Halicarnassus was the capital, formed part of the Persian empire, and its native rulers bore the title of satrap although its connection with the central government had always been very slight. Traces of matriarchy, the rule of women, lingered in the country, and Mausolus in 351 had been succeeded by Artemisia, his sister and wife, and she soon afterwards by her sister-in-law Ada. This latter, dispossessed by her brother, came to Alexander and proposed to adopt him as her son and help him to win Halicarnassus. Her offer was accepted; for Memnon had both strengthened the fortifications of the town and also collected a very strong force of Greeks, so that Alexander knew that his task would be difficult. And so indeed it proved: attacks were countered by sorties, burning pitch and oil were poured down upon the assailants, walls shattered by the ram were rebuilt; and when at last the Macedonians broke in Memnon succeeded in setting fire to the town and took refuge in a neighbouring fort from which he had access to the sea.

Winter was now approaching, and after appointing Ada as satrap of Caria, Alexander sent his newly married soldiers home on leave and himself began a short

## INVASION OF ASIA : FIRST PHASE

campaign against the mountain tribes of Lycia and Pisidia, who were more open to attack while the snow lay deep upon the hills. Two routes from Caria were open to him, one a difficult way over the mountains, the other an easy but dangerous road along the Pamphilian coast under Mount Climax. A south wind here drove the sea up to impassable cliffs, and travellers could very easily find themselves trapped. But Alexander boldly took the risk. The waves on this occasion yielded him the obedience which they refused to Canute, and making the passage safely he carried out the operations which he had planned with complete success. He then struck inland towards the north, and after occupying Celænæ, 'Black Rocks,' the old capital of Phrygia, he made his way to Gordium. There he rested for a time, and during his stay solved the riddle of the Gordian knot.

The story tells that long, long ago, there lived in Phrygia a farmer named Gordius, so poor that he only possessed two pair of oxen, one for his plough, the other which he used to draw his waggon. One day when he was ploughing, an eagle settled on the ox-yoke and refused to move : so harnessing the other pair to the waggon he set off to consult the oracle. On the way he met a maiden drawing water at the well, who was herself endowed with the gift of prophecy ; and she not only told him what to do about the omen, but also consented to become his wife and bore him a son whom his parents called Midas. Some years later civil war broke out in Phrygia, and when the people went to the temple the oracle told

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

them that strife would only cease when a king came to them in a waggon. At that moment Midas drove into the market-place in his father's cart, was hailed by the people as the destined king, and dedicated the waggon as a thank-offering to Zeus. A second oracle was then given that any man who could unfasten the yoke knot of cornel bark would become lord of all Asia.

This tale had certain associations with Alexander's own history, for in Macedonia there were gardens known as the rose gardens of Midas and on the day of his birth two eagles had settled on the roof of his father's palace and remained for many hours motionless. The yoke knot was so elaborate that for many centuries all attempts upon it had failed : but Alexander once again was seized with a yearning to achieve the impossible. He went to the temple and gazed earnestly at the knot ; and then by a sudden inspiration drew his sword and with one stroke cut through the fastenings. That night there was a great storm of thunder and lightning, which convinced Alexander that he had interpreted the oracle aright and that complete victory was destined to be his.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE INVASION OF ASIA : SECOND PHASE

**I**N the last months of 334 and the early part of 333, when Alexander was fighting in Pisidia and resting at Gordium, things happened elsewhere which had a decisive influence on the course of events. After his flight from Halicarnassus, Memnon went to Darius and put before him two propositions. The first was that some officer on Alexander's staff should be bribed to murder his king ; the second that the Greek cities, once again with the help of Persian ships and Persian money, should be induced to revolt. Both suggestions were in accordance with the traditional policy of the Persian government, and both were adopted. A messenger was sent secretly to Alexander the Lyncestian, who had taken the place of Calas as commander of the Thessalian cavalry, offering him the throne of Macedonia and a quarter of a million in gold if he would arrange for Alexander to be removed. A similar offer probably had led to Philip's death ; but this time the plot failed. Before the Lyncestian could do anything suspicions against him were aroused and he was arrested and some years later put to death.

The second plan was then taken in hand, and Memnon was given command of the Persian fleet, and commissioned to collect all the Greek mercenaries



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

who were then in Asia Minor and put them on board ship. This he did, and before sailing to Greece prepared a counter stroke to Alexander's occupation of the coast towns by seizing the most important islands in the Aegean as naval bases. Chios, which had joined Alexander after the surrender of Miletus, was betrayed into his hands by the oligarchs, and with it all Lesbos except the town of Mytilene, to which he laid siege. Messengers had already appeared announcing the imminent arrival of a great Persian armament at Eubœa, and in every city the anti-Macedonian party was making ready to take up arms. And then suddenly, just as Mytilene was on the point of surrender, by one of those strokes of good fortune, to which Alexander was accustomed, Memnon, on whom the whole plan depended, died.

The Rhodian was by far the most sagacious of Darius' counsellors, and for two years had proved a stubborn and formidable barrier in Alexander's path. But the Persian nobles always distrusted him, both as being a Greek and as having been the willing instrument of the tyrant Artaxerxes III. To them his naval expedition seemed a useless diversion of strength, for they had no conception of the value of sea power nor any idea of how to use their superiority in ships, while they had good reason to distrust the Greek cities, who were willing enough to take Persian money but gave in at the first show of force. Accordingly the satraps of the western provinces in their turn approached Darius and urged him, now that Memnon was dead, to abandon altogether the project on which

## INVASION OF ASIA : SECOND PHASE

he had been engaged, and to concentrate his land forces for a decisive victory. Darius was always at the mercy of stronger wills than his own, and although Memnon's plan had so far been eminently successful and threatened to put Alexander into a position of great danger, the wavering monarch consented to bring all naval operations to an end. A dispatch was sent to Pharnabazus, who had taken Memnon's place at Mytilene, ordering him to abandon the expedition to Greece, and to send back all the Greek mercenaries at once to Persian headquarters.

In the eyes of the Persian supreme command the battle of the Granicus had assumed the aspect of an unfortunate incident which could be disregarded. It was certainly a bright idea to try and kill Alexander at the first onset ; but a mistake had been made in attempting a difficult feat with inadequate strength. This time things were to be arranged differently. A really strong army could easily be collected, one that would outnumber the enemy five to one ; and if the battle was fought on the open plain, overwhelming numbers must win the day. It was a pity that the good old Persian archers, the men who under Cyrus conquered the world, had now ceased to exist : but there were always the Greek mercenaries to fall back upon, soldiers by profession and hardened by many campaigns, who could hold the Macedonian phalanx in check. Then, with the Greeks in the centre, the Persian cavalry, faithful retainers fighting under their masters' eyes, would surely, even if it were only by dint of numbers, prove victorious.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

To Darius, who had never seen a Macedonian army, these arguments seemed very sound ; and after spending the spring of 333 in collecting his forces at Babylon, he marched up the Euphrates and for some time waited for Alexander in the plain east of Mount Amanus. Meanwhile Alexander himself, leaving Gordium in the spring, hastened southwards through the hill country of Cappadocia to seize the pass over the Taurus known as the Cilician Gates. Speed was always the essence of his strategy, and we are told that on this march he covered sixty-two miles in a day and night. Arsames, satrap of Cilicia, never expected such an effort, and was still considering the advisability of strengthening the small force which was holding the defile when Alexander arrived at the entrance. The ascent was so steep and so encumbered with rocks, that all beasts of burden had to be unloaded before they could take the road, and in the face of a vigorous resistance progress would have been very difficult. But the Persian pickets were of different mettle from the Spartans who once at Thermopylæ had faced overwhelming Persian odds. They had no fancy to regard themselves as a forlorn hope with their backs against the wall, and when they saw the Macedonians climbing up in the darkness they retreated in haste, leaving Alexander to get through the pass without the loss of a man.

The road down to Tarsus and the coast of Cilicia lay open before him ; and as he was told that Arsames intended to set fire to the city, he set off again at full speed, making the descent of three thousand feet

## INVASION OF ASIA : SECOND PHASE

from the Taurus range in three days. Once more swift action was successful, and Arsames fled before him without doing any damage. But the heat of the Cilician plain in midsummer is intense, and while he was still fatigued by his forced march Alexander one day bathed in the ice-cold waters of the river Cydnus which ran through the town. The result was a violent fever which for some days threatened to have a fatal ending. At the crisis of the malady his physician, Philip the Acarnanian, prepared him a draught ; but just as he was about to drink it a page came into his bedchamber with a letter from Parmenio, warning him to be careful, for Philip was in Persian pay. Alexander read the lines, tossed off the draught, and handed the letter to Philip : and once more it turned out that Parmenio was wrong.

From Tarsus, which was in later ages to become a centre of Hellenic learning, Alexander marched to Soloi, where the people spoke such incorrect Greek that they have given their name to our word solecism. Here he received news that the sea stronghold outside Halicarnassus had been taken by the troops which he had left behind there, and in gratitude for this success, and his own recovery from fever, he held a great festival with sacrifices to Æsculapius, the god of healing, gymnastic and musical contests and a ceremonial parade of the army. The coast line of Asia Minor as far south as Soloi was now in his hands, and there was little to fear from the Persian fleet, so that he was able at last without danger to march against Darius. Accordingly, late in August he went

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

back to Tarsus and thence by the coast road to Mallus. There he heard that the Persian army was the other side of the mountains, two days' journey from the Pass of Bailan, and so, after visiting the shrine of Amphilochus of Argos, the reputed founder of that town, he marched on through Issus over the Jonah Pass to Myriandrus where the road through the Bailan Pass began. A violent storm held him up at Myriandrus for a day, and before he could resume his march a report came in that the Persians had crossed Mount Amanus by a pass much further northwards and were then in his rear. This seemed so improbable that he sent some of his officers down the coast in a pinnace to find out the truth ; and when they returned and said that Darius was indeed at Issus he hastened back by the way he had come and made ready to give battle.

Tennis players know how wearing to the temper it is to sit and wait until one's opponent chooses to appear on the court : and this strain on patience Darius had been compelled to endure for two months. His fighting force was nothing like as large as that which he afterwards mustered at Arbela, although his advisers considered it sufficient ; but he had also with him a host of non-combatants. There was his own harem and the harems of his satraps with their mutes and eunuchs, cooks, pages, dancers, grooms and attendants of every kind, most of them far more useful in a palace than in a camp, and quite out of place in serious warfare. For many weeks this motley throng waited for the Macedonians to appear and be

## INVASION OF ASIA : SECOND PHASE

annihilated. But nothing happened, and at last the Persian nobles began to think that Alexander was frightened and meant to stay permanently on the coast. Amyntas, the Macedonian refugee, was in their camp and assured them that an attack on his part was certain and likely to be more formidable because it was delayed ; but they refused to listen. It was only necessary, they said, to cross Mount Amanus : on the other side they would take the presumptuous invader by surprise, and there could be no doubt as to what the result would be. Darius once again preferred the worse counsel to the better. He sent back his treasure and most of the camp followers to Damascus, and passing through the mountain defiles came down to the coast at Issus, where he found and massacred the wounded men whom Alexander had left behind.

Issus stands at the head of a little plain between the mountains and the sea, through which the river Pinarus runs. The plain is about five miles long and half a mile broad, and in it the steep banks of the Pinarus make a natural defence against an enemy coming from the south as Alexander was doing. On the northern side of the river Darius placed the twenty thousand Greek mercenaries, in front at the centre of his line, he himself in his chariot being immediately behind them surrounded by his body-guard. On either side of the Greeks were heavy-armed Persian infantry, drawn up in deep formation and much hampered by lack of space. The strong Persian cavalry was massed on the right wing, where

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

the river approaching the sea ran through a level space of sandy ground, and on the left there were more native infantry, stretching from the plain up the lower slopes of Amanus, who were intended to move forward as soon as possible and take Alexander in the rear. The whole Persian army amounted probably to about 150,000 men : against them there were 25,000 infantry and 5000 horse.

The day before the battle Alexander addressed a speech of encouragement to his soldiers and drew up his plan of operations. He knew the dimensions of the battle-field, for he had passed through it only a few days before ; and he realized the advantage offered him by the narrowness of the ground. His chief danger was that the enemy might break through his line close to the sea, and before he left Myriandrus he prayed earnestly to Poseidon and made a votive offering to him of a four-horse chariot. His army then started and reached the top of the Jonah Pass at midnight. There they rested for a few hours, and in the early morning made the descent in column of route, deploying into line of battle as they reached level ground. The Agrianians and other light-armed troops were on the extreme right up the hill-side, where they succeeded in keeping the Persians completely in check. Alexander himself at the head of the Companions came next : the phalanx was in the centre. Parmenio was in command of the left wing with strict orders to hold the Persian cavalry at all costs, and at the last moment the Thessalian horse were sent him as a reinforcement.







*Photo Alinari*

## ALEXANDER IN BATTLE

[face p. 97

## INVASION OF ASIA : SECOND PHASE

Alexander began the engagement as usual by a cavalry charge against the Persian left wing. The enemy resisted desperately and he was slightly wounded in the thigh, but at last he was able to begin his favourite turning movement towards the centre. Although progress was difficult he steadily drew nearer to Darius; and that monarch, who was by temperament a man of peace, when he saw the Macedonian lancers riding furiously towards him, turned his chariot with all speed and withdrew out of danger. His bodyguard perforce followed him, and the rest of the left wing seeing their king's departure prepared to follow his example. For the moment, however, Alexander was unable to follow up his advantage, since both his left wing and his centre were in serious difficulties. The Persian cavalry were much superior in numbers to Parmenio's men, and a fierce battle on the seashore was going in their favour until they saw that Darius had left the field, when they broke off the fight in disgust and joined in the general retreat.

In the centre Alexander's help was still more sorely needed. The phalanx in crossing the Pinarus had fallen into some disorder, and the Greek mercenaries seizing their opportunity rushed against the gaps in the line of spears, and for a time more than held their own against their Macedonian rivals. Even when Alexander took them on their left flank they still kept in close order, and finally retired with little loss. Ten thousand of them under Amyntas took ship for Egypt and later entered the service of Agis, King of Sparta.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

The rest made their way across the mountains and fought once more for Darius at Arbela. The Persians suffered most severely in their retreat and we are told that one deep ravine was choked with corpses. But Darius made his escape, and although Alexander found his bow and shield in a lonely ravine, night compelled him to give up the chase.

That evening Alexander entered the royal tent where Darius had left his wife, his mother and his three children, and gazing at the costly furniture remarked scornfully, 'This, then, is how the Persian king is lodged.' From behind the curtains he heard the sound of women weeping for Darius, whom they believed to be dead, and he at once sent one of his staff to tell them that the king had escaped. The queen mother came forward and thought that she had made a fatal mistake when she prostrated herself at Hephæstion's feet, mistaking him for the conqueror. But Alexander courteously raised her up with a few words of comfort and gave orders that she should have all the care and attention due to her rank. As for Stateira, the wife of Darius, who was reputed to be the most beautiful woman in Asia, he refused even to see her. Women, he said, are torments to the eye, and it is best to avoid temptation.

On Alexander the victory at Issus had a very similar effect to that which followed after the Granicus. He now considered himself not only to be king of Macedonia, captain-general of Greece, and overlord of Asia Minor, but he also, by right of conquest, laid claim to the whole Persian empire. Some little time

## INVASION OF ASIA : SECOND PHASE

after the battle Darius wrote to him offering friendship and alliance together with a request for the return of his family, and received the following reply :<sup>1</sup> ‘ Your ancestors invaded Macedonia and the rest of Greece and did us much harm, though we had done none to them ; I have been duly appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Greeks, and invaded Asia desiring to take vengeance on Persia ; but it was you who began the mischief. You assisted Perinthus, which wronged my father ; and Ochus sent a force into Thrace, which is under our sovereignty. My father was murdered by conspirators whom you instructed, as you yourself boasted in your letters before all the world ; you assassinated Arses with the help of Bagoas, and seized the throne unjustly and, according to Persian Law, illegally, doing grievous wrong to Persians ; you sent improper letters to the Greeks about me, urging them to declare war upon me. . . . Regard me then as Lord of all Asia and come to me. If you fear lest by coming you may receive some ungracious treatment at my hands, send some of your friends to receive proper pledges. When you come to me, request and receive your mother, wife and children and what you will. You shall have whatsoever you persuade me to give. And in future when you send, send to me as Supreme Lord of Asia, and do not direct what you require as on equal terms, but tell me, as lord of all your possessions, if you have need of aught ; otherwise I shall take steps concerning you as a misdemeanant.’

<sup>1</sup> Arrian, *Anabasis*, II, 14, 4. (Tr. E. I. Robson.)

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

But while Alexander's horn was thus exalted, Issus was a crushing blow to the Greek die-hards, who had been as confident as the Persians themselves of his defeat. Several cities before the battle sent envoys to Darius assuring him of their sympathy, and although the Athenians were prudent enough to await the result before they took open action, Demosthenes found eager listeners when he announced that Alexander's retreat was cut off in Cilicia and that his end was near. At the news of his victory exultation gave place to depression, and depression to fear, so that the members of the League of Corinth thought it well to send a gold wreath to the conqueror and to thank him for saving Hellas from the barbarians. The Spartans, however, and their king Agis even now were undaunted. The Persian fleet was still in the Aegean, and Agis went to Pharnabazus and persuaded him to lend ten galleys and seventy thousand pounds. With the money he induced the Cretans to join him and afterwards hired the Greeks who had escaped from Issus. With this force he began open hostilities against Macedonia, and remained a thorn in Antipater's side until his defeat and death at the battle of Megalopolis in 331 B.C.

There was yet one more result that followed from Issus. Soon after the battle Parmenio was sent to Damascus, which surrendered to him without fighting ; and the very large amount of Persian treasure which he captured there relieved Alexander from all financial difficulties in the future. Up to this time his expenses had been great and his revenues small, for with politic

## INVASION OF ASIA : SECOND PHASE

generosity he had only taken from Asia Minor an amount just sufficient for his army's bare subsistence. But after the capture of Damascus money became plentiful and also opportunities for spending it. In the city were many Greeks, reputable and disreputable, philosophers, actors, buffoons and courtesans, who now deserted the Persian cause and attached themselves to the victorious army. Alexander was free-handed, his officers were eager for pleasure, and a time of prosperity began for all the light ladies who could boast that they had been taught the art of love at Athens. If we may believe Plutarch,<sup>1</sup> even Alexander took to his bed a Persian named Barsine, captured at Damascus ; but to this story there are at least three strong objections. Alexander in this case is said to have followed Parmenio's advice, and although Parmenio was very fond of giving advice, it practically never was accepted. Secondly, Alexander was notoriously continent, and Plutarch tells us that with this one exception he never knew a woman until he married Roxana. Thirdly, Barsine was Memnon's widow and the mother of a grown-up son, and it is hardly likely that a lady of such mature age would have had much sex appeal for the young king. Even more improbable is the other tale,<sup>2</sup> that Alexander about this time commissioned Apelles to paint a portrait of Campaspe, his favourite, naked, and that when the painter fell in love with his model, he presented the damsel to him.

Battles like Issus and the Granicus have a spectacular

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Alexander*, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, XXXV, 36.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

interest which commends them to the writers of history, but from a military point of view they were far less arduous than the siege of Halicarnassus or the siege of Tyre which Alexander took for his next task. In his character tenacity of purpose was combined with daring courage, and although he must have been tempted to pursue Darius, he adhered to his plan of securing all the coast line of the Eastern Mediterranean before he struck into the interior of Asia. From Issus therefore he returned to Myriandrus, where he founded a new city, Alexandria, the modern Alexandretta, and then marched southwards along the Syrian coast. Byblus, our Beyrout, surrendered to him, and at Sidon he received a warm welcome, for Sidon had been mercilessly treated by Artaxerxes III in 344 B.C., when it was betrayed to the Persians by its king and forty thousand of its people perished. The next place was Tyre ; but Tyre, which had taken the place of Sidon as the chief city in Phœnicia, remained faithful to the Persian cause. Alexander asked permission to cross to its island and sacrifice to his ancestor Heracles ; but he was informed that the Tyrians were not receiving any strangers in war time, and that he must be content to pay his devotions at the shrine of Melkart on the mainland.

This, of course, was mere insolence, and Alexander prepared at once for a siege. He had never met a Semitic people before and did not know how desperately Semites will struggle in defence of their cities ; but in the next seven months he had some of the hardest fighting in all his career. Tyre, with its high houses,

## INVASION OF ASIA : SECOND PHASE

narrow streets, and busy dye-works, stood on a small island half a mile from the shore, so that Alexander began by building a mole across the water. In the shallows progress was easy, but when the workers got close to the island the Tyrians assailed them fiercely from the city walls with a shower of missiles. Siege towers were then built at the end of the mole to reply to the attack, but fire ships were sent out which not only burnt down the towers but also destroyed a good part of the works.

Alexander had told his men that the capture of Tyre meant the end of the Persian fleet ; but he now saw that without ships he could hardly take the city. Fortunately Sidon was on his side, and when he went back there in person he was able to get together a force of over two hundred galleys. With these he blocked the two entrances to the harbour at Tyre on the sea side and putting some of his siege engines on board ship and others on the reconstructed mole, he prepared for a grand assault. But even so the Tyrians did not give up the struggle. They prevented the ships from coming close to their walls by dropping rocks into the sea and when Alexander tried to use sweepers their divers went down and cut the cables. Alexander replied to this by using chains : the Tyrians countered by capturing some of the vessels in a surprise attack. Still, the rocks at last were cleared away, and a storming party in two large transports drew up to the city. Bridges were got out and Alexander at the head of his men broke through the defenders. Eight thousand of the Tyrians were killed before the fighting



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

ended : the rest of the people, men, women and children, were sold into slavery.

This was in July 332, and some little time before the city fell Alexander received a second letter from Darius. In this the Persian king offered a ransom of two and a half millions for the return of his family and the hand of his daughter in marriage. He also proposed to surrender all the lands lying west of the Euphrates. Alexander read the letter to a council of his officers and Parmenio said, 'If I were Alexander I would accept the offer.' But Alexander had other views. 'So would I if I were Parmenio,' he replied ; and then sent Darius the following answer : 'I need no money from you, nor will I accept a part of your country in place of the whole ; for all the country and all its treasure are already mine. If I wish to marry your daughter I shall marry her without your permission ; and if you desire kind treatment at my hands, you must come to me in person.'

## CHAPTER VII

### EGYPTIAN INTERLUDE

THE fall of Tyre and the capture of the Tyrian fleet relieved Alexander of any danger from the sea, and left him free to go in pursuit of Darius, if he wished. But he did not wish, and he did not go. In all probability Parmenio was extremely annoyed that he neither accepted the wide lands which Darius was willing to yield, nor for the moment made any attempt to conquer them and the rest of Asia by force of arms. What Parmenio expected, however, Alexander very seldom did. Egypt lay before him, and the lure of that ancient and mysterious land beckoned him irresistibly on. Darius was left to collect another army, if he could, and Alexander, like the Roman prince in a later day, ‘*visendæ antiquitatis Ægyptum proficiscitur.*’

But to his intense disgust he found the road again blocked, and this time by a fat black eunuch. The coast road to Egypt passes through Gaza, and Gaza closed against him the gates which Samson had once carried off on his shoulders. The town was held for the Persians by an Ethiopian named Batis, a man of huge bulk, stubborn courage, and stupid fidelity, who believed that he could succeed where the Tyrians had

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

failed, and keep Alexander in check until Darius should come down and overwhelm him. He had therefore collected a strong force of Nabatæans to man the walls, stored enough provisions to last for several months, and strengthened the already massive fortifications at every vulnerable point. To leave such a town and such a commander unconquered behind him was an insult to Alexander's pride, and he halted reluctantly to begin another siege.

Gaza lay about a mile from the coast, which at this point is protected by dangerous reefs, so that an attack from the sea was impossible. Moreover the mound upon which the town was built was surrounded by stretches of soft, loose sand, over which it was very difficult to move a heavy siege train. Still, the place had to be taken, and while the army encamped outside orders were sent to bring up the towers, catapults, and battering-rams which had been left at Tyre. When they arrived operations began, and on the very first morning Alexander twice nearly lost his life. The soothsayer Aristander had warned him to beware of that day and to stay in camp, for an eagle had dropped a stone close to him before being caught in some ropes, and the omen presaged eventual success but immediate danger. Alexander, however, in spite of his advice went out to reconnoitre, and as he drew near the town a man dropped down the wall and running to the Macedonian column flung himself at his feet. The king thought that he was a prisoner who had escaped from the enemy and was preparing to question him, when the man sprung up, dagger in

## EGYPTIAN INTERLUDE

hand, and was only foiled in his deadly purpose by the quickness of Alexander's own sword. So Batis was disappointed in his attempt at murder, but a little later a chance shot from a catapult fulfilled the omen, and Alexander was carried back to camp grievously wounded.

The period of his convalescence was spent by the Macedonian engineers in constructing an artificial mound equal in height to that on which the city was built. Rams placed upon it made a breach in the wall, and when Alexander had recovered from his hurt the whole phalanx was brought up and the place taken by assault. Most of the garrison were killed fighting ; but Batis himself was captured alive and brought to the royal tent. Of what happened there we have an account by that eccentric writer Hegesias of Magnesia (fl. 250 B.C.), the founder of the Asianic style of rhetoric : ' Alexander seeing that the man was very fleshy and big and most grim (for he was black even in colour) detested both the deed which he had planned and also his looks, and ordered the soldiers to pass a bronze ring through his feet and drag him round naked. In pain, pounded by the many roughnesses of the ground, he began to scream. And it was just what I am now saying that brought people together. His agony racked him and he kept on uttering outlandish cries, asking " master " for mercy. And the solecism made them laugh. His fat and the bulge of his flesh suggested another sort of animal, a huge Babylonian beast. So the crowd mocked him, insulting with military insolence an

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

enemy repulsive in feature and uncouth in his ways. It would appear, indeed, that Alexander took the same vengeance on the eunuch's body that Achilles had taken on the corpse of Hector outside Troy. But it is more pleasing to record the fact that on the same day he sent home to his tutor Leonidas a load of frankincense captured in the town, remembering how in his childhood the old man had reproved him for extravagance in the use of the precious stuff.

The siege of Gaza had meant two months' delay, but from there the army marched in seven days without further hindrance to Pelusium, and in November 332 Alexander crossed the frontier into Egypt. He had now at last reached a country which was ready to welcome him wholeheartedly as a friend. The Greek cities in Asia Minor, which he came to liberate from Persia, had regarded his appearance with mixed feelings ; and although the democrats were willing to accept his help against their fellow-citizens, there was in most towns a strong oligarchic faction which preferred the old regime. The Phœnician cities also, with the exception of Sidon, were quite content with their position ; for under Persian rule they enjoyed peace and security and were encouraged by their masters to sail the sea and to extend their trade to every part of the Mediterranean. In 332 B.C. Tyre was far more prosperous than any city in mainland Greece and had outstripped all commercial rivals ; but its prosperity depended upon the continuance of the Persian system, and its desperate resistance to Alexander

## EGYPTIAN INTERLUDE

is not surprising, for it was fighting for its money as well as for its life.

In most countries Persian government was comparatively just and humane, and of all the kings who followed after Cyrus only two were tyrants in the worst sense of the word. But, as it happened, these two, Cambyzes and Artaxerxes III Ochus, were the only Persian monarchs who impressed themselves very clearly on Egyptian imagination, and the impression was a painful one. Both Cambyzes and Artaxerxes went out of their way to attack the native religion, which was Egypt's dearest possession: they outraged the gods, plundered the temples, and insulted the priests. The mischief which Cambyzes did was partly rectified by Darius I, who consented to receive the insignia of royal power from the high priest's hands; but neither Xerxes nor his successors took any trouble to conciliate the priests or the people, and the result was that in 404 B.C. the Egyptians, with some help from Greece revolted from Persia and for some sixty years remained independent under their own Pharaoh. Then in 342 Artaxerxes III came up from the East against them with a very strong army, and after crushing all opposition by force of arms and ejecting Nectanebo<sup>1</sup> from the throne proceeded to repeat the worst outrages that Cambyzes had formerly committed. He defiled the temples, plundered their treasures, and, as a crowning enormity, stabled an ass in the shrine

<sup>1</sup> In the Alexander romance of the pseudo-Callisthenes Nectanebo is a sorcerer who escapes to Macedonia, and visiting Olympias in the guise of Ammon becomes the father of Alexander.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

of the great god Ptah and commanded that the sacred bull Apis should be killed and served to him for dinner.

The Egyptians were a patient and long-suffering people, and they bowed before the mad fury of Artaxerxes. But in spite of the stagnation into which the country for many centuries had fallen since the great days of Thothmes, religion still remained a living force and they waited hopefully for their gods to send them a champion who should save them from the foreign tyrant. In Alexander they saw the destined liberator, and they welcomed him with joy. The Persian satrap Mazaces, who knew their temper, realized that it was impossible for him to offer any effective resistance, and surrendered Memphis, the modern Cairo, and its treasure without fighting. Amid the acclamations of the people Alexander rode into the town at the head of his troops, and with politic sagacity declared at once to the priests that he was ready to pay to the native gods the reverence which the Persian tyrant had denied them.

To the followers of Zoroaster's austere creed the Egyptian pantheon with its animal gods was an obscene and disgusting absurdity ; but Alexander was a Greek, and already familiar with the eagle of Zeus, the owl of Athena, and the snake of Æsculapius, so that Anubis the jackal, Thoth the ibis, and Horus the falcon, aroused in him no feelings of ridicule. Among the Persians the great god Ahura-mazda was the supreme ruler of the universe far removed from all mortal

## EGYPTIAN INTERLUDE

cares : for the Egyptians the chief function of their innumerable deities was to watch over the life and welfare of the Pharaoh ; and here again Greek religion with its local divinities, protecting each his favourite city, moved on much the same plane. The Greeks themselves had recognized an essential likeness when they equated Zeus with Ammon, Demeter with Isis, Apollo with Horus ; and Alexander was quite willing to carry the process one step further and himself become Pharaoh.

The priests at Memphis accordingly made preparations at once for his ceremonial recognition as king of Egypt. The impious Artaxerxes had defiled the temple of Ptah by the slaughter of the sacred bull : now it would be possible to cleanse it from the pollution and renew its sanctity. The pious Alexander would be solemnly enthroned within its walls, and then as Pharaoh would offer sacrifice to the very Apis whom the Persian had thought to slay. The ritual, dating from immemorial antiquity, was long and elaborate. The new king first of all was washed by the priests, and with perfumes and incense purified from all worldly taint. Then he was invested with the royal robe stiff and heavy with gold, and a double crown, the pschent, was placed upon his head. Next he was escorted to the throne, and before him the priests intoned an endless series of prayers and chants, invocations to the gods and to the dead, curses against enemies and unbelievers, blessings upon the Pharaoh and his faithful people. Finally the high priest came forward and recited all the titles whereby Alexander



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

was now to be addressed. He was Horus, the strong prince, the protector of Egypt, who hath laid hands on the lands of the foreigners. He was the beloved of Ammon, the chosen of Ra, King of Upper and of Lower Egypt. And lastly he was the mystically begotten son of Ra.

After this ceremony Alexander became officially a god and was worshipped as such by seven million people in Egypt. The priests doubtless explained to him the miracle whereby the gold that served Ra for blood would in time pass into his veins and make him immortal; but how far he gave credence to their words we do not know. Arrian, however, tells us that at Memphis, as before at Peace and at Gordium, 'Alexander was seized by a yearning'; and this time the inward voice bade him to make a pilgrimage to the shrine of Ammon and ask the oracle if he was indeed of divine stock.

According to the Egyptian tale the great god Amon-Ra had one day taken boat down the Nile from his temple at Thebes of the Hundred Gates, and had then travelled westwards across the African desert until he reached the oasis of Siwah, midway between the Delta and the Great Syrtes. There he had gathered his priests around him and established a seat of oracle not only for his Egyptians but for the whole world. The heroes Perseus and Heracles came there to him for advice before setting out to slay Medusa and Busiris; King Laomedon and Queen Semiramis both sent to learn from him knowledge of their future fate; and when, late in the seventh century B.C., Battus the Stammerer came from Thera to found the Greek

## EGYPTIAN INTERLUDE

colony of Cyrene on the adjacent coast, he soon became well known in all the Mediterranean lands. The Cyreneans found that the date palms of his oasis supplied them with another export in addition to their staple silphium, and identifying him with their own Zeus set his ram's-horns upon the god's head on their coins. By the beginning of the fifth century the fame of his oracle in Greece equalled that of Delphi and Dodona ; Pindar wrote a hymn to him ; Cimon, Alcibiades, and Lysander were some of his many clients ; and just before Alexander's visit a sanctuary in his honour was constructed at Athens.

In the fourth century, therefore, it is plain that the oracle of Ammon enjoyed a world renown which neither Karnak in Egypt nor Delphi in Greece then possessed ; and Alexander was well advised by his secret monitor to obtain from him an answer to the question which had long haunted his mind, for against Ammon's word there could be no appeal. The journey to the oasis was likely to be long and tedious ; but on the other hand it was an adventure which involved some slight danger but did not mean any fighting ; and after nine months' siege warfare outside Tyre and Gaza a voyage into the unknown offered considerable attractions to Alexander's spirit. It was impossible to take a large force across the desert, so that Parmenio with the army was left behind at Memphis, and Alexander himself with a small body of chosen companions, which included Callis-

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

thenes and Ptolemy, set off along the coast road westwards.

A week's steady riding brought the travellers to Parætonium where an embassy from Cyrene had come to welcome Alexander with offers of friendship and alliance. Camels and guides were also waiting in readiness, for at this point the road to the shrine struck southwards across the desert, and all the water and provisions needed for the rest of the journey had to be taken with them. From Parætonium they passed into the Sahara, and for some days Alexander could enjoy the stillness of the sands, the burning splendour of the sun by day and the mild radiance of the moon at night. Then one morning a sudden wind sprung up, and he had to face a danger which makes even the desert dwellers tremble. Clouds of sand came whirling down upon his caravan, which blinded the eyes, choked the throat, and made it almost impossible to breathe. Soon all the marks of their route were obliterated, and when at last the simoom was over the guides had to confess that they had lost their way. At this moment, however, two ravens appeared, flying slowly ahead towards the oasis, and under their guidance the caravan track was regained.<sup>1</sup> But even so trouble was not finished. The delay caused by the sand storm had exhausted the supply of water, and the voyagers were beginning to feel the pains of thirst when providence again came to their

<sup>1</sup> The incident bears a curious resemblance to the opening scene of Aristophane's play *The Birds*, where the Athenian adventurers are guided by a raven to Cloudcuckooland.

## EGYPTIAN INTERLUDE

aid. The sky clouded, and a copious rain enabled them to drink their fill and also collect enough water to last until the trees of Siwah came in sight.

The oasis lies close to where the border line between Egypt and Tripoli now runs, and during this century it has seen much confused fighting between the Senussi on the one side, and British, French, and Italian troops on the other. It is about six miles long and five miles wide and its fruit gardens and abundant date palms afford subsistence to some four thousand native settlers. Some scanty remains of a temple built in the fourth century still exist and are thus described by the English traveller, William Browne, who visited the oasis in 1792: 'A single apartment built of massy stones, of the same kind as those of which the Pyramids consist; and covered originally with six large and solid blocks, that reach from one wall to the other. The length I found thirty-two feet in the clear, the height about eighteen, the width fifteen. . . . In the interior are three rows of emblematical figures, apparently designed to represent a procession; and the space between them is filled with hieroglyphic characters, properly so called.'<sup>1</sup>

Browne also noticed the dew-ponds, the salt deposits, and the strange spring of water of which Arrian speaks: 'The oasis alone, of all the surrounding country, catches the dew. A spring too rises from it,

<sup>1</sup> Browne, *Travels in Egypt, Syria and Africa*, London, 1799, p. 19.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

not at all like ordinary springs which rise from the ground. For at midday the water is cold to the taste and even more to the touch, it is as cold as can be, then when the sun sinks towards evening it is warmer, and from evening on it grows warmer and warmer till midnight, and at midnight it is at its warmest; but after midnight it cools off in turn, and from dawn onwards it is already cold, but at midday coldest. This goes on in due rotation day by day. Then there are natural salts in this district, to be obtained by digging; some of these salts are taken by the priests of Ammon to Egypt. For whenever they are going towards Egypt, they pack the salt into baskets woven of palm leaves and take them as a present to the king or to someone else. The grains of this salt are large; some of them have been known to be more than three fingers' breadth; and it is as clear as crystal. Both the Egyptians, and others who are particular about religious observances, use this salt in their sacrifices, as being purer than the sea-salts.'<sup>1</sup>

The news of Alexander's arrival in Egypt doubtless spread quickly along the western coast, and the embassy of the Cyreneans which came to meet him at Parætonium shows that his visit to the oasis was anticipated. We can imagine the excitement among the priests who served the oracle, for though Greek pilgrims were not uncommon, Alexander was the first Pharaoh who had ever come to Siwah. A deputation was sent out to greet him, and he was escorted to the

<sup>1</sup> Arrian, *Anabasis*, III, 4. (Tr. E. I. Robson.)

## EGYPTIAN INTERLUDE

temple where the god awaited his consultant. Every oracle had its own special ritual : at Delphi the Pythia, sitting on her tripod over the steaming chasm, raved in ecstasy : at Dodona the sacred doves in the oak trees by their moaning conveyed the divine message : at Siwah the figure of the god by gestures gave knowledge of what was to be. When the pilgrims were gathered in the outer court, Ammon appeared before them, a statue glittering with gold and jewels, sitting in the boat which had once brought him down the Nile. Eighty priests carried the vessel on their shoulders, and before him went a company of virgins singing hymns in honour of the god and strewing his path with flowers. The Macedonians gazed in silent wonder as the procession slowly circled the court, the god waving his arms as he went, and making gestures which only his prophet could interpret. And so he was carried again out of sight into the inner precincts of the shrine.

Then came the solemn moment. The priests returned to Alexander and told him that the god had entered the Holy of Holies and would speak to him there alone. His companions must remain in the outer court and might put their questions later ; he was to come unattended into the divine presence. With bowed head Alexander passed through the massive portals into the inner court of the priests, and so to the entrance of the god's own dwelling. There the aged prophet was waiting to greet him and spoke the fateful words : 'Chaire, Pai Dios,'

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

‘Hail son of Zeus’; and together they went in to the god.<sup>1</sup>

Of what passed between Ammon, the prophet, and himself in the seclusion of the inner shrine Alexander never spoke. When he returned to the outer court and his followers asked him what had happened, he replied that he had heard what he desired, and said no more. But it was noticed that his face was radiant; and if he himself was silent others were ready to supply knowledge by surmise. The report was soon spread abroad, probably on the authority of Callisthenes, that Alexander had been recognized by Ammon as a god, a report which was received by the Macedonians with suspicion and by the Greeks with bland indifference. Other oracles hastened to follow Ammon’s lead. The sibyl of Erythræ came out of a trance with the same message, and at Miletus the sacred fountain in the shrine of Didyma, which for more than a century had been inactive, began suddenly to run again and the temple oracle repeated the joyful news.

In the announcement of Alexander’s divinity there was at least a basis of truth, if we accept the words of Ammon’s prophet as inspired by the god; but the picturesque details which were added later were entirely the creation of fancy. Cleitarchus, for example, in his *Life of Alexander* invented three questions which he said the king and his party put to the oracle, and also supplied the answers. The first was ‘Shall

<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that the prophet spoke incorrect Greek and that *Pai Dios* should be *Paidios*, not God’s son but godson. Alexander, however, certainly took it in the first sense.

## EGYPTIAN INTERLUDE

I conquer the whole world ?' Answer, 'Yes.' The second ran 'Have I punished all my father's murderers ?' Answer, 'Do not blaspheme. Philip's murderers have been punished. Your father no mortal man can hurt.' The third question was put by the companions, 'Shall we render Alexander divine honours ?' Answer, 'If you do, you will thereby be pleasing Zeus.' This of course is pure fantasy, although it has been widely repeated by serious historians. All that we really know is that Alexander was fully satisfied with what the god told him. Some time after his visit he wrote to Olympias and told her that Ammon had given him some secret information which he could not divulge in a letter and would impart to her when he returned to Macedonia. But mother and son never met again.

From the oasis Alexander returned to Memphis by the direct caravan route eastwards across the desert. Of his work in Egypt, the foundation of Alexandria, the exploration of the Nile, the organization of government, we shall speak in another chapter.<sup>1</sup> But in tracing the development of his personality the visit to Ammon is more significant than any of these, and may be regarded as the turning point in his life. Up to the battle of the Granicus he was merely a sanguine youth, cast indeed in an heroic mould like his ancestor Achilles, but for the moment nothing more than king of Macedonia. After the Granicus his ambition expanded to the conquest of Asia Minor, and when he had cut the Gordian knot he saw himself destined

<sup>1</sup> Chapter XV, pp. 242-244.



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

by fate to be a mighty monarch. Issus enlarged his view once more and now he could not be satisfied until he was king of Asia, to whom millions of subjects would pay reverence as to one who was at least half divine. Then came Egypt; and after the priest's words what else might he believe but that he was a god among men ?





ALEXANDER HUNTING

*Ottoman, Museum*

## CHAPTER VIII

### ARBELA

WHILE Alexander lingered in Egypt, Darius was busy making preparations to challenge the invader once again and to stake his fortunes on a last decisive battle. His advisers told him, and he was quite ready to believe them, that the defeats on the Granicus and at Issus might be explained by the unfavourable nature of the ground and that at neither battle had the full military strength of the empire been employed. On this occasion the engagement was to be fought on a level plain, and every corner of Western and Central Asia, as far north as Scythia, as far south as Arabia, and as far east as India, was to be ransacked for troops. Throughout the winter of 332 and the spring of 331 couriers went speeding from Babylon to bring together such a force as must crush Alexander, and the result of these efforts may be seen in the catalogue of the Persian army which Arrian gives us.<sup>1</sup>

Marshalled there in one host were Bedouins from the wild tribes who dwelt by the coasts of the Red Sea, fierce Pathans from the Himalayas, making up for lack of discipline by their savage courage, and Scythians from the distant steppes of the Caspian, who came

<sup>1</sup> Arrian, *Anabasis*, III, 8.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

not as subjects but as allies to aid. These Sacæ were mounted archers, their horses and themselves clad in heavy armour, but the wild hordes who came from Bactria, Carmania, Parthia, Hyrcania and Sogdiana were mostly light cavalry accustomed to fighting *en masse* and armed with sword and spear. All these were from the East, and to them were added from the northern Satrapies Armenians, Parthians, Hyrcanians, and Cappadocians, men of the most diverse origin and mode of life, but now all united in the same cause.

The larger part of the army was composed of these irregular troops, hastily levied, scantily equipped, and sadly wanting in steadiness. Their numbers made them formidable and they were actually dangerous until they had been put to the test of a pitched battle. But they were incapable of serious resistance when attacked by a properly trained force, and for the stern fighting which he knew he had to expect Darius relied more upon the new troops that he had raised in Babylon, Susa, and all the Persian lands; upon the royal guard, the heavy cavalry and the infantry with golden pomegranates upon the butts of their spears who had for centuries been the pride of the Persian army: above all upon his eight thousand Greek mercenaries, the veteran swashbucklers who had cut their way out from the field at Issus and were eager for one more fight against the Macedonians.

Moreover, on this occasion Darius had two fresh weapons of offence on which his counsellors built high hopes. The tribes living in the country west

## ARBELA

of the Indus had sent him fifteen Indian war elephants with their native mahouts. These animals, their fronts protected with plates of metal so that they were almost as invulnerable as our tanks, had been trained to advance in the van of the battle line, and it was expected that their onset would throw the Macedonian cavalry into confusion and frighten their horses to a precipitate retreat. The second novelty consisted of two hundred scythed chariots with which also the Macedonians were unfamiliar. From each hub of their two wheels long curved knives projected, and if they could be driven into a mass of infantry taken by surprise they were capable of causing as much havoc as a nest of machine guns. The Roman poet Lucretius, writing three hundred years later, gives a grim picture of them in action<sup>1</sup>: 'Reeking with indiscriminate slaughter they lop off limbs so instantaneously that what has been cut away is seen to quiver on the ground before any pain is felt. One man perceives not that the wheels and devouring scythes have carried off among the horses' feet his left arm, shield and all; another while he presses forward sees not that his right arm has dropped from him; a third tries to get up after he has lost his leg, while the dying foot quivers with its toes on the ground close by.'

To give chariots, elephants and his immense force of cavalry a chance of using their strength to advantage Darius had determined to choose for his battle ground this time a wide plain where they could manœuvre

<sup>1</sup> Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, III, 640.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

with ease. It was also necessary for the assembly of an army drawn from the ends of the world that the place should lie convenient to the main roads of his empire. Such a spot was found in the open plains lying between the Upper Tigris and the mountains of Kurdistan, where the eastern road from the Mediterranean starting at Alexandretta meets the western road from farther Asia which passes through Hamadan, and where the northern road from the Persian Gulf following the course of the Tigris joins the mountain routes through the gorges of the Euphrates, Tigris and Araxes which lead eventually to the Euxine and the Caspian Sea. Such a road junction suggests in itself the establishment of a trading centre and to-day, not far from the spot where Alexander crossed the Tigris, there stands the town of Mosul, famous in the Middle Ages for the light muslin fabrics which have made the name familiar to the whole world.

Close to the place where the battle was fought the river Zab runs into the Tigris from the north-east, the nearest town being Arbela, 'the city of the four gods,' the modern Erbil, now a small settlement of Kurds, some fifty miles to the south. There was indeed a village called Gaugamela in the vicinity whose name some purists, beginning with Plutarch, have given to the engagement; but it is as Arbela that the battle is generally and rightly known. The plain was already famous both in Greek and in world history, for it was here in 401 B.C. that the treacherous Tissaphernes seized and murdered the chief officers of the Ten Thousand after the battle of Cunaxa,

## ARBELA

leaving Xenophon to get across the Zab as best he could and find his way over a thousand miles of wild country back to the sea. It was here also that three centuries previously the great city of Nineveh, capital of the Assyrian Empire, had stood, whose capture in 612 B.C. by the Chaldeans and Medes brought the power of the Assyrians to an end. In 331, however, Nineveh was forgotten, and its site was only marked by a few mounds on the plain; and so it remained until in 1842 an adventurous Englishman, A. H. Layard, sailing down the Tigris from Mosul, noticed some cuneiform inscriptions upon bricks projecting from the earth and began the excavations whose results can now be seen in the British Museum.

Alexander during his stay in Egypt had doubtless received full reports of the preparations which Darius was making; but he was in no haste to anticipate the course of events, and knew that the larger the army Darius could collect the more decisive would be the result of the coming battle. It was therefore not until the early spring of 331 that he left Memphis, and even then he waited for some weeks at Tyre before putting himself at the head of his army and striking inland. His first halt was at Damascus, and he then marched northwards for some two hundred miles to Aleppo, where he turned to the east intending to cross the Euphrates at Thapsacus. He had already sent his engineers and pioneers forward to construct bridges there, but when, late in July, he arrived he found the work uncompleted and a large force of Persians under Mazæus, satrap of Syria, on the other



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

side of the river apparently prepared to dispute the passage.

As soon, however, as Alexander himself appeared on the scene, Mazæus hurriedly withdrew, and when the bridges were finished the Macedonians crossed the river without opposition. Then followed a laborious journey northwards round the Mesopotamian desert, hastened by false reports from captured Persians that Darius was waiting on the Tigris. A succession of forced marches brought the army early in September to the second of the two great rivers, only to find no trace there either of Darius or any Persian force. Five days were spent in ferrying the men across in small boats; a task of difficulty and danger, for the current of the Tigris between its steep banks is extremely rapid; and while the troops were resting after the passage there was a partial eclipse of the moon, which modern astronomers calculate occurred on the evening of September 20th, 331. This caused some alarm in the ranks, but Alexander, who was both a mystic and a scientist, was not disturbed. An assurance was obtained from the army seers that the omen was really favourable, and sacrifices were offered to the Moon, the Sun and the Earth, the three powers which Alexander knew to be responsible for the eclipse.

By this time definite information was beginning to come in that Darius and his army were not far distant, and Alexander started with extreme caution to march southwards along the road to Babylon. On the fourth day he came into contact with reconnoitring parties of the enemy, and realized that he was near

## ARBELA

his goal; and on September 30th he at last came in actual sight of the Persian army. Darius had received news of his approach, and had drawn up his men in line of battle expecting an immediate attack. But Alexander, who had lost the advantage of surprise, decided to postpone the battle till the next morning, and spent the remaining hours of the day carefully examining the battlefield. This done he gave orders that the men should have their supper and then go to sleep.

The night was spent in very different fashion by the two armies and their two leaders. In the early watches Alexander was seen standing in front of his tent by the side of his favourite soothsayer engaged in mysterious sacred rites such as the priests of Egypt used and praying to the God of Fear that he might send panic upon the enemy. But while he prayed and his Macedonians slept, the Persian host was all astir and under arms in anticipation of a night surprise, and Darius himself was riding up and down to see that every man was in his place. The glare of camp fires and blazing torches lit up the whole plain between the river and the hills, and a tumultuous sound of voices rose up from their lines as if from a vast ocean. Parmenio and some of the older Companions, who had been waiting impatiently for their young general to finish his incantations, heard the confused din, and went to his tent to propose an immediate attack. But Alexander was too good a general and too skilful a politician to risk an enterprise where failure would mean ruin and success might well be put down to

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

chance ; and with a curt ‘ I will not steal my victory ’ he dismissed his officers and went to bed.

For the rest of the night we are told that he slept more soundly than was usual with him, and when morning came he was still lying buried in slumber. His divisional commanders on their own initiative gave orders for the men to breakfast, and then, as the occasion was urgent, Parmenio ventured into his tent and called to him again and again until at last he opened his eyes. ‘ How can you sleep,’ said the old warrior, ‘ as if you were already victorious instead of being on the verge of the greatest of all your battles?’ But Alexander with a smile replied, ‘ We have finished with chasing Darius through the desert and shall I not sleep now that victory is in my hands?’ Then rising from his bed he put on a close-fitting Sicilian vest and over that a linen doublet, part of the spoil taken at Issus. His helmet was of iron but gleamed like polished silver and fitted to it was a gorget likewise of iron set with precious stones. He had a sword too of wonderful temper and balance, a gift from the king of the Citieans, and a belt presented to him as a mark of honour by the city of Rhodes. Thus equipped he mounted Bucephalas, and after praying to heaven to defend his cause if he were in truth the son of Zeus, he gave orders for his men to leave their entrenched camp and advance on to the plain.<sup>1</sup>

The two armies facing one another were very

<sup>1</sup> These details are taken from Plutarch. The best account of the battle itself is given by Arrian, who, although he wrote five hundred years later, had before him the narratives of Aristobulus and Ptolemy, who commanded divisions at Arbela.

## ARBELA

disparate in numbers. To give the exact total of the Persian force is impossible, and the ancient estimate of one million foot soldiers and forty thousand horsemen is certainly exaggerated; a probable surmise would put Darius with about half a million men of all arms. We know precisely, however, the manner in which the Persian line of battle was arranged, for a plan of the field drawn up by Darius himself was found after the battle at Arbela. The Bactrian and Sogdian cavalry under Bessus were on the extreme left, and next to them a mixed force of Persians, infantry and cavalry combined: in front of this wing were posted the heavy armed Scythian archers and one hundred of the scythed chariots. The extreme right wing under Mazæus was composed of Syrians and Mesopotamians, and next to them up to the centre Hyrcanian and Armenian infantry with Parthian, Indian and Cappadocian horsemen, and fifty chariots in front. In the centre there was an enormous mass of troops in deep formation, Arabians, Uxians and Babylonians, strengthened by the flower of the Persian heavy cavalry and infantry, the 'king's kinsmen' as they were called and the royal guard of 'applebearers.' Darius in his chariot was in the exact centre of the line, and on either side of him were the Greek mercenaries whose especial task it was to engage the Macedonian phalanx. In the centre also were placed the fifteen Indian elephants and in front the remaining scythed chariots.

Against this huge force Alexander had under him about forty thousand infantry and seven thousand

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Macedonian and Thessalian cavalry, so that he was outnumbered by ten to one. On the other hand his men were veteran soldiers led by experienced commanders and had already been victorious in two pitched battles: the Persian army was largely composed of untrained Asiatics without experience of regular warfare. Of the right wing Alexander himself as usual was in command, leading in person the eight squadrons of royal horse guards, the Companions, with Cleitus in charge at the end of the line. Heavy infantry, the Hypaspists, under Nicanor, joined the cavalry of the right to the six brigades who formed the phalanx in the centre. On the left wing starting from the centre, were more infantry and then the allies and Thessalian cavalry, the whole left being under Parmenio's command. In front of the phalanx light-armed troops, javelin men, and archers were scattered about the field to deal with the scythed chariots when they attacked. The camp was left in charge of the Thracian auxiliaries.

As the Persian line was at least three times the length of Alexander's and many ranks deeper, there was a considerable chance of his being outflanked, for in the open plain there were no natural protections on which he could depend. Therefore as a precaution he drew up a second line behind the phalanx in the centre, its flanks protected by light infantry and cavalry on the right and by the Odrysian horse on the left. Its commanders were instructed to face about, if the enemy gained the rear, and to call in the troops on each flank, thus forming a hollow square with the

## ARBELA

phalanx. This was the one tactical novelty introduced in the scheme of battle, which otherwise proceeded on the usual lines of the oblique attack from the right wing ; but as it happened there was no need in the actual fighting to put it into use.

The engagement began with the advance of the Macedonian right wing cavalry in echelon formation. But as Alexander drew near the Persians he saw that their centre in itself equalled the length of his entire line and that he was outflanked on his right by their entire left wing and on his left by their entire right. He therefore decided to concentrate his attack on one point in the hope of breaking through their line, and changing the direction of his advance drew off towards the right. This manœuvre interfered with Darius' plan for a chariot attack over the ground which had been previously levelled in front of his centre, and he ordered the Bactrian horsemen on his left wing to advance and check the movement. Alexander countered by bringing up his light cavalry from the second line, and a fierce fight ensued in which the Macedonians, although at first at a great disadvantage, finally by superior discipline prevailed.

Meanwhile the Macedonian phalanx was slowly and steadily advancing across the plain, and Darius before they got to close quarters seized the opportunity to make the attack with his chariots which he hoped would decide the battle. His expectations, however, were grievously disappointed. As soon as the chariots drew dangerously near they were met by volleys of arrows which killed or disabled many of the drivers,

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

while others were pulled out of their cars by the Agrianian skirmishers who boldly crowded round and cut the reins and traces with their knives. Even so enough chariots were left to cause considerable damage, and the drivers, putting their horses to a gallop, drove down upon the close ranks before them. But once again they failed. The spearmen of the phalanx standing as steady as if they were on parade coolly opened their ranks and the chariots dashed through the lanes thus formed, neither doing nor receiving any hurt. Their knives only cut the air, and when at last their horses halted from exhaustion Alexander's grooms and sutlers in the rear had no difficulty in making their drivers prisoners.

All this was going on in the centre of the field while the issue of the cavalry combat on the Persian left wing still hung in the balance. At length the Bactrian horsemen there began to give way, and Darius hastily sent another large body of mounted Indians to their help, thus making for the moment a gap in his left wing. Alexander was on the alert and saw that the gods had now given him the chance he wanted. Putting himself at the head of Cleitus' men, who were in the front of the battle, he led the eight squadrons of Companions straight against the opening in the enemy line. The Persians wavered before the fury of his charge and began to roll back towards the centre spreading confusion as they went. Moreover the Macedonians in the phalanx, who had reformed their ranks after disposing of the scythed chariots and advanced quickly over the plain, were

by this time pressing hard on the Greek mercenaries in the Persian line and driving them backwards, so that Darius and his guard were now on all sides exposed to attack. The fight became furious, but Alexander and the Companions rode boldly on, making straight for the king and striking with their lances at the faces of the Persian nobles who tried to bar the way. Darius was already sufficiently disheartened by the failure of all his battle plans, and when his charioteer fell wounded by his side and he saw that his own person was in imminent danger, he stepped down from his car, mounted a swift mare and fled from the field. His guards went with him, the other troops followed, and within an hour the whole Persian left wing and centre was in full retreat.

The Macedonian right wing and the phalanx had done all that their commander expected of them. But on the left things had not gone so well. To Parmenio had been assigned the uninspiring task of holding the enemy and withstanding his attacks while Alexander was winning victory in another part of the field, and on this occasion the task had been an extremely difficult one, for the Persian right wing was composed of fairly good troops, and in Mazæus, as Alexander afterwards recognized, it had a commander of signal capacity. Taking advantage of the initiative in attack and his immensely superior numbers, Mazæus early in the engagement had advanced against Parmenio, had succeeded in outflanking him, and by the end of the morning was pressing him so hard that when the Macedonian phalanx went forward, Simmias, the



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

commander of its sixth brigade nearest to the left wing, thought it advisable to stay behind, and so prevent Parmenio from being completely surrounded. In consequence a gap was made in the Macedonian left centre through which a strong column of Persian and Indian cavalry rode, and piercing the reserve line behind the phalanx, galloped into Alexander's camp. Overpowering the Thracian guards they fell at once to plundering the stores, and Parmenio, still hard pressed on his front and flank and with the enemy now also in his rear, sent off a rider to Alexander telling him that the camp was being ravaged and asking for immediate assistance.

Alexander, who was anxious to pursue the Persians at once, returned a sharp reply that the spoils of both camps would fall eventually to the side that won the battle; but on reflection he considered it best to comply with Parmenio's request for aid, and ordered his men to wheel about and return across the plain. In the interval however, the Macedonian reserve line behind the phalanx, which the enemy horsemen had taken by surprise, had faced round according to their previous instructions, and falling upon the Persians who were still busy plundering the camp, had compelled them to return whence they came. They found the way back barred by Alexander and the Companions who were riding towards the left wing, and there was a desperate struggle between the two bodies of cavalry in which sixty of the Companions fell before valour and discipline once more won the day. This proved the last serious encounter;

## ARBELA

for when Alexander at last reached Parmenio he found that the enemy had been beaten off and that the battle was over.

Some men at this would have rested, but not Alexander. The Persian host was shattered, and its remnants might be safely left to disperse to the distant lands from which they had been drawn ; but Darius and the royal treasure had only a few hours start, and it was possible still to overtake them. The infantry were left to enjoy a well-earned repose, but Alexander himself with his personal staff and a body of cavalry rode off through the darkness in pursuit of the fugitives. But with half a million desperate men rushing blindly over the sandy plain progress was but slow and when he reached the river Zab he found it impossible to go further. All the approaches to the one narrow bridge were choked by jostling crowds fighting to get across, and thousands before his eyes were swept to death as they tried to swim the rushing tide. Reluctantly he turned back ; and then, if we may believe the story in Curtius, found himself once again in deadly peril. A body of horsemen bore down upon his little party, and Alexander had to kill three of them in single combat before he got clear.

So ended the fateful day, October 1st, 331 B.C., and with it ended the Persian Empire.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE TREASURE CITIES

**A**RBELA was one of the decisive battles in the world's history, and after it Alexander was never faced by any serious opposition from the Persian army in the field. It is true that the completeness of his triumph was somewhat marred by the escape of Darius : but for the moment Darius was negligible, and it only remained for the conqueror to pluck the fruits of victory. Among those fruits perhaps the most acceptable were the stores of precious metal of which he had become master ; for he was in need of money, and even the best of soldiers expect some reward. Before him lay the treasure cities of the Persian Empire, Susa, Persepolis and Pasargadae ; and for the next year he was largely occupied in putting to a practical use the enormous masses of gold and silver which in them had accumulated.

The origin of this treasure is a curious story. Among all the early peoples, in India, Egypt, and Babylonia, gold was a divine substance, and it was the possession of gold that gave their kings the immortality which was denied to common folk. The two great monarchies of the Nile and the Euphrates both accepted this belief and scoured the world for the 'seed of heaven.' But while in Egypt the Pharaoh had as much gold

## THE TREASURE CITIES

as possible buried with him, in order that the precious metal might still pass into his veins, in Mesopotamia the royal stores of gold apparently did their magic work in the ruler's lifetime and were left undisturbed at his death. As the centuries went by, therefore, the treasure was continually growing in size, and when in the middle of the sixth century the Median Empire was overthrown by Cyrus, it had already reached huge dimensions. Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Empire, secured as the result of his victory 30,000 lb. weight of gold bullion as well as an immeasurable quantity of gold plate; and to this his successor, Cambyses, shortly afterwards added the spoils of Egypt.

Up till the time of Darius I the Persian Empire had no currency. Commerce took the form of barter and contributions to the king were paid in kind. Darius for the first time established a mint and issued the gold 'darics' which bore his name and effigy. But even so most of the coins did not pass into common use but were hoarded with the bags of bullion from which they were cut. Tribute, however, was now paid in gold, and from western Asia, divided into twenty satrapies, payments in bullion and gold dust, amounting to many millions in our money, were ruthlessly exacted every year. In the wild gorges of the Ural Mountains miners wrestled with pick and shovel against the griffins who were supposed to guard the shining veins, and sent the rough ore down by way of the Euxine to Susa. Where the rivers of Asia Minor run down in flood to the sea

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

naked slaves stretched sheepskins and held them taut against the tide so that they might catch the grains of golden sand in the fleeces. Amid the deserts of Southern Arabia Phœnician caravans painfully made their way through the burning wastes, struggling on to reach the mysterious realm of Ophir, whence in exchange for their dyed stuffs they brought back the gold which their master required of them. As for India Herodotus must tell his own story<sup>1</sup>:

‘There are other Indians whose mode of life resembles that of the Bactrians. They are the most warlike of the Indians, and these are they who are sent to procure the gold; for near this part is a desert by reason of the sand. In this desert then, and in the sand, there are ants in size somewhat less indeed than dogs, but larger than foxes. These ants, forming their habitations underground, heap up the sand, as the ants in Greece do, and in the same manner; and they are very like them in shape. The sand that is heaped up is mixed with gold. The Indians therefore go to the desert to get this sand, each man having three camels, a male on either side and a female in the middle; this last the man mounts himself, having taken care to yoke one that has been separated from her young as recently born as possible; for camels are not inferior to horses in swiftness, and are much better able to carry burdens. The Indians then set out for the gold, having before calculated the time, so as to be engaged in their plunder during the hottest part of the day, for during the heat the ants hide themselves underground. When the Indians arrive at the spot, having sacks with them, they fill these with the sand and return with all possible expedition. For the ants, as the Persians say, immediately discovering them by the smell, pursue them, and they are equalled in

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, III, 102.

## THE TREASURE CITIES

speed by no other animal, so that if the Indians did not get the start of them while the ants are assembling, not a man of them could be saved. Now the male camels (for they are inferior in swiftness to the females) slacken their pace; but the females, mindful of the young they have left, do not slacken.'

Of the gold a certain portion always went with the king's person as symbol of his power, and this Darius succeeded in taking with him from Arbela. But the greater part was kept in the three treasure cities, and to Susa, the nearest of the three, Alexander, directly after the battle, sent Philoxenus with a body of light cavalry to keep the bullion safe until he himself arrived. His own immediate destination was Babylon, for it was impolitic to leave the most famous city of western Asia in Persian hands and he was also anxious to see the ancient capital of the Medes and Chaldeans, of which Herodotus in his history had given the Greeks so vivid an account. He expected a stout resistance, for Babylon, surrounded by the massive walls which Queen Semiramis had built, and protected outside the walls by a maze of canals, was able to stand a long siege. But he found his expectations falsified. The satrap of Babylonia was the same Mazæus who had fought so vigorously at Arbela, and his experiences in that battle had convinced him that further resistance was both impolitic and useless. He had therefore returned in haste to Babylon and had arranged with the priests and city magistrates to surrender the city to the conqueror without a fight. So when Alexander arrived at the head of his army prepared for battle, he was met not by a hostile force

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

but by bands of citizens carrying garlands of flowers. Mazæus came out and handed over to him the keys of the gates, and his soldiers were welcomed by the people as honoured guests.

For a month the army stayed in the great city, and during that month Macedonians, Thracians and Greeks were able for the first time to form some idea of the splendour of the ancient civilization which, in their ignorance, they had long despised as being the work of barbarians. In their march through Asia Minor into Egypt they had been in countries with which the Greeks for many centuries had been familiar and which were already permeated by Greek ideas. But here they were in another world, which had a civilization that went back for two thousand years to the days of Hammurabi, and was altogether strange to them. They gazed in wonder at the huge brick walls and the Gate of Ishtar, at the hanging gardens where trees grew on the top of high towers, at the temples with their throng of priests and astrologers, and at the ruins of the great tower of Bel-Marduk. They walked in the crowded streets and saw the camel caravans bringing in the varied products of Syria, Arabia, India, and the Far East; and they were entertained at banquets where they ate strange rich food and drank the sweet wine of the country from cups of gold.

At Babylon in 331 the first steps were taken in that fraternization of peoples in one world empire which Alexander henceforth always kept before his eyes. The Persian Empire had been based on force,

## THE TREASURE CITIES

and the Persians felt little sympathy with the beliefs and customs of the nations over whom they ruled. Their own religion was monotheistic and they looked with contempt upon the manifold divinities of the Greek and Babylonian pantheon. It is true that Cyrus in 559 B.C., when he captured Babylon from the Medes and Chaldeans, had accepted the homage of the priests and consented to the ceremonial rite whereby each new year's day he received the dominion of the world from Marduk by clasping hands with the god's image. But Xerxes, who was a devout believer in the one and only god Ahura-mazda and was, moreover, exasperated by the defeat at Salamis which he attributed to divine displeasure, in 479 not only carried off the image from its shrine, but also destroyed many of the temples in Babylon as he had destroyed the temples at Athens, and with them the great tower of Bel-Marduk, which was the centre of the old Babylonian religion.

To interfere with any god was not the way of the Greeks, and it was their ready acceptance of other people's mode of life that made them such perfect colonizers. Alexander now took exactly the opposite course to that which Xerxes had followed. He encouraged the Babylonians to resume the worship which their Persian rulers had interrupted, rebuilt the temples which Xerxes had overthrown, and set ten thousand men to repair the Marduk tower. With the priests he entered into friendly relations and obtained from them much valuable knowledge, and from their hands accepted the title of King of Babylon as distinct from



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

the kingship of Persia. Finally, on their instruction, he in person offered sacrifice to Marduk at a great feast which recalled the splendour of the days of Nebuchadnezzar.

But while he thus conciliated the Babylonians and revived their national spirit, Alexander also showed the Persian nobles that they were to have a share in the government of the new Empire, and that power was not to be kept exclusively in Macedonian hands. He had already made Mithrines of Sardis governor of Armenia, and he now gave back to Mazæus the satrapy of Babylonia which he held under the old regime. But as a sign of the change that Arbela had made, Mazæus now only held authority in matters of civil administration. An armed force of Macedonians was lodged in the citadel under a Macedonian commander, and to a Macedonian official the collection of tribute and all details of finance were entrusted.

These arrangements took about a month to settle, and then the army set off again upon the march; for Alexander had no intention of allowing himself or his men to be enervated by oriental luxury. If he had been in the least the slave of pleasure, Babylon might have been the snare that Capua afterwards was to Hannibal: but for him luxury had no attraction, and whenever the choice between the difficult and the easy path was offered him, he, like Heracles, always chose the first. Moreover, although Babylon was a great city, it was not strictly speaking a Persian city, nor had it the peculiar sanctity in Persian eyes with which Susa and Persepolis were invested. To con-

## THE TREASURE CITIES

vince the Persians that a new ruler had arisen, it was necessary for him to show himself as master in the cities where lay the tombs of their former kings; and so about the beginning of November Alexander left Babylon for Susa.

To the Greeks of the fifth century B.C. Susa was a place so distant that it seemed hardly real. But after the end of the Peloponnesian War their ambassadors had gone there often in quest of Persian subsidies, to return with tales of the immense distances they had traversed and of the wonders they had seen, the royal palaces, the treasure houses, and the citadel built by the same Memnon who had once fought at Troy. It lay about three hundred miles south of Babylon, and Alexander did the journey in twenty days, on the way meeting a messenger from Philoxenus who told him that the city had surrendered unconditionally, that the treasure was intact, and that the satrap Abulites threw himself upon Alexander's mercy. This was all to the good; and when Alexander entered he found that the treasure satisfied his hopes, for besides huge stores of perfume, tapestry, purple, and precious stones, there was a mass of gold and silver ingots amounting in value to fourteen million pounds in our money.

Of this three thousand talents in silver were at once sent off to the sea for dispatch to Macedonia, together with the bronze statues of Harmodius and Aristogiton, the 'liberators of Athens,' which Xerxes had removed to Susa and were now returned to their native city. Arrangements were made to deal with

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

the gold later, and Alexander then proceeded to celebrate his occupation by a series of public ceremonies, a sacrifice to the twelve Macedonian gods, a torch race, and a gymnastic contest for the army. He had now been joined by Amyntas, who brought him several thousand new troops from Macedonia ; and these he incorporated into the eight companies of Companions, dividing each company into two squadrons each with its own leader. By this time it was the middle of December, and Persepolis and Pasargadæ still remained to be taken. Abulites was re-appointed as satrap of Susiana, with two Macedonians, Mazaros and Archelaus, in charge of the citadel and the three thousand troops left behind. A palace was assigned to the women of the Persian royal family, with tutors to teach them Greek ; and Alexander set off once again upon the eastern road.

Thus far Alexander had been marching through lands of which he had some knowledge, on fairly level country traversed by good roads. Henceforth he had to find his way over mountains which no Greek had ever climbed, to cross brawling torrents, to avoid dangerous swamps, and to force a passage through defiles where a surprise attack at any moment was possible. He had, of course, Persian guides with him ; and they took him along the route which their kings had been wont to follow in their journeys from Susa to Persepolis. The climb from the plain to the mountains was arduous in itself, and was rendered more difficult by the necessity of getting the army across four swift rivers ; and when at last they reached

## THE TREASURE CITIES

the mountain defiles Alexander found that the Persian kings had been accustomed to pay the Uxian tribesmen a sum of money to allow them to pass through unmolested, and that his guides expected him now to do the same.

The idea of purchasing permission from savages was utterly repugnant to the proud Macedonian ; and yet it was plainly dangerous to expose the army to attack in the labyrinth of defiles which confronted him. Terrace on terrace the mountains rose in nine succeeding lines to the central mass of Kouh-i-Bæna, with valleys between so deep that the villages in them only saw the sun in the morning and lay in shadow the rest of the day. Through one of these valleys ran the Persian carriage road which the guides proposed to follow ; but, as they told him, it was completely blocked at one point by a rock fortress which the Uxians held and were only prepared to surrender on receipt of a ransom.

Alexander was in a dilemma ; but he cut the difficulty as he had cut the Gordian knot, by swift and unexpected action. Telling the Uxian messengers that they might await his arrival and would then certainly receive the payment that was due to them, he led his men up a precipitous side-path which the mountaineers considered impossible and had left unguarded, and at daybreak fell upon the Uxian villages and massacred the inhabitants in their beds. Then, marching at full speed, he posted Craterus with one part of his force on the heights, and himself descended into the valley, so as to attack the Uxians in their

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

fortress both in front and from above. The conflict which followed was short and decisive : the Uxians gave way before the assaulting column, and when they tried to escape up the hill-side they were caught by Craterus and his men. Most of them were cut down : on the survivors Alexander imposed a yearly tribute of a thousand horses, five hundred oxen and thirty thousand sheep ; for of gold and silver they had none.

This action opened the way to the summit of the pass, but there were still difficulties to face. The mountains were deep in winter snow, the nights were bitterly cold, and it was hard in these wild surroundings to find a suitable spot for a bivouac. For fifteen days the army laboured on until they reached the defile known as the Persian Gates, where the satrap Ariobarzanes was waiting to bar their passage in a fortified camp with an army of forty thousand men. High walls had been built before the camp across the entrance to the defile and when Alexander attempted an assault his troops were met by showers of arrows from the fortification and by masses of rock rolled down from the surrounding heights. To take the position by a frontal attack was obviously impossible : it only remained to turn it by scaling the mountains and taking it in the rear : and this task, one of the most dangerous in all his career, Alexander himself undertook.

Craterus was left behind with about half the army to distract the attention of the enemy by feint attacks ; but he was ordered to engage seriously only when he heard the sound of Macedonian trumpets on the

## THE TREASURE CITIES

further side of the wall. The remainder of Alexander's men followed their leader up the mountain sides through forests encumbered with snow drifts, and climbing through the night reached the other side of the pass before it was quite day. A little time was given them for rest, and then Alexander came down, and leaving three regiments to bar the eastern entrance to the defile, advanced upon Ariobarzanes from the rear. The first and second outposts were taken by surprise and cut down while their comrades slept peacefully in their warm tents, never dreaming that an enemy was behind them. Suddenly the Macedonian trumpets sounded the charge, and while Alexander fell on them from one side Craterus attacked on the other. In the faint light of the December morning they were caught completely off their guard, and when Ptolemy came down from the hill-side with three thousand fresh assailants they broke in utter disorder. Ariobarzanes with a few followers made his escape to the mountains; his army was massacred almost to a man.

The road to Persepolis was now clear, and Alexander with his light cavalry rode quickly forward; for he had received a letter from the Persian Tiridates warning him that unless he came soon the treasure would be gone. Fortunately he was in time. The news of Ariobarzanes' defeat had not yet arrived when he appeared before the gates and he entered the city without opposition, after having traversed three hundred miles of most difficult country in something under a month.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

At Susa Alexander had been confronted chiefly with memorials of Xerxes' reign : Persepolis and the neighbouring city of Pasargadæ were the resting places of two men far greater than Xerxes, Darius I and Cyrus, and held to be the very sanctuary of the Persian Empire. In the valley close to Pasargadæ, Cyrus in 559 B.C. had defeated Astyages, the last king of the Medes ; and there he had built his palace and his tomb, the latter still preserved, of which Strabo tells a curious tale :<sup>1</sup> 'The tomb of Cyrus,' says the geographer, 'was a small tower in a park, hidden by a dense growth of trees. It was solid below, but had a roof above it and a sepulchre, the entrance to which was extremely narrow. Aristobulus says that at Alexander's order, he passed through the entrance to do honour to the tomb, and that he saw inside a golden couch, a table set out with goblets, a golden sarcophagus, numerous garments, and furniture adorned with precious stones. All this he saw on his first visit, but later the tomb had been pillaged and everything carried off except the couch and the coffin, which had only been broken to pieces and the corpse removed. And this robbery had taken place though the tomb was surrounded by a guard of Magi, who received for their maintenance a sheep every day and a horse every month.' The horse was obviously meant to be sacrificed to Cyrus, and the story suggests that the Persian kings, though not regarded as immortal, were yet like the Pharaohs, supposed to have an existence after death. The Magi performed the same

<sup>1</sup> Strabo. *Geography*, XV, 3, 7.

## THE TREASURE CITIES

functions for them as did the Ka priests in Egypt, and it was for a ghostly visitant that the couch, the table, and the golden cups were kept ready.

Of Parsargadæ little remains save one column, one pillar, one sculptured bas-relief, and two marble platforms. On one of these, however, the tomb of Cyrus, known for centuries as "The tomb of the mother of Solomon" still stands. The platform is made of seven courses of white limestone, the lower steps of considerable height, the upper more shallow. The mausoleum itself is built of huge blocks of the same stone, so beautifully fitted together that the structure is still intact, although the metal clamps have been removed. A modern traveller recently crawled through the narrow doorway which Strabo describes and found the inner chamber all blackened with smoke, and quite empty save for a string of votive offerings and an Arabic inscription upon one of the walls.<sup>1</sup>

With Persepolis the case is different, and its ruins are still a most impressive sight.

‘ They say the Lion and the Lizard keep  
The courts where Jamshid gloried and drank deep  
And Bahram, that great hunter, the Wild Ass,  
Treads o’er his head and he lies fast asleep.’

So Omar sang ; for in his time, as now, the place was known as Takht-i-Jamshid, ‘Jamshid’s Throne,’ and was believed to be the resting-place of the national hero. In the fourth century A.D. it was called Sad

<sup>1</sup> *Ten Thousand Miles in Persia*, Sir P. M. Sykes, 1902.

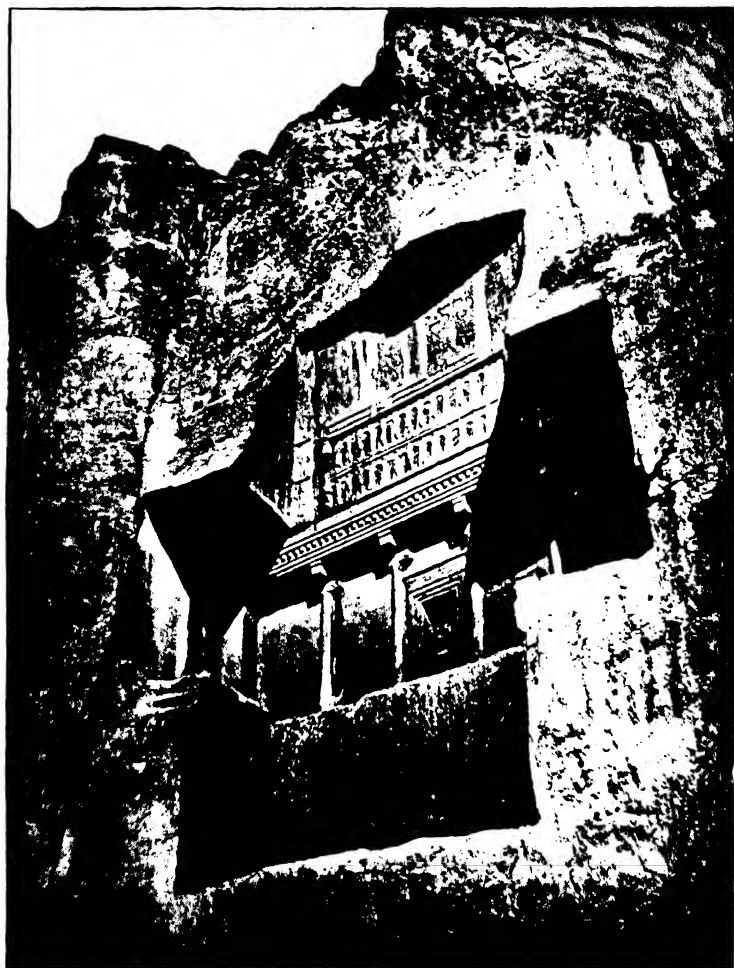


## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Satun, 'the hundred columns,' and still another name used by early European travellers was Chehel Minar, 'The Forty pillars.' In any case, it is certain that here is the site of the ancient Persepolis, and in an inscription still clearly readable Darius tells us that 'on this spot by the grace of Ahura-mazda I built a fortress where no fortress had ever stood before.'

The palaces were built upon a platform made of limestone blocks, fifty feet long and ten feet wide, quarried from the neighbouring hills. It is over five hundred yards long and some three hundred yards wide, varying in height from twenty-five to fifty feet. A retaining wall supports it, and it is approached by a staircase of one hundred and six steps still in good preservation, up which ten horsemen can ride abreast. At the head of the staircase stood the Gateway of all Nations through which the peoples passed to pay homage to the Great King, and then came the Porch of Xerxes, its two gates both guarded by a pair of colossal winged bulls, eighteen feet high, now sadly mutilated. On the next level, eleven feet above the first, its front wall decorated by long lines of sculpture well preserved, was the Hall of Xerxes, of which thirteen huge columns now remain. On a third platform, ten feet higher again, came the Palace of Darius and the Palace of Xerxes; and most magnificent of all, the second largest structure in the ancient world, the Hall of the Hundred Columns. Of the columns not one now is standing, but in the sculptures on the four great stone doorways, facing the four points of the compass, we can still see Darius sitting with





THE TOMB OF DARIUS AT PERSEPOLIS

## THE TREASURE CITIES

curled hair and flowing beard beneath the umbrella of state.

In these palaces the Persian kings lived, and immediately behind their palaces are three of the royal tombs where they maintained a shadowy existence after death. Two of these are supposed to be the tombs of Artaxerxes the Second and Artaxerxes the Third ; the other, left unfinished, was destined for Darius Codomannus. As for the great Darius I, he lies five miles away from Persepolis on the side of the hill known as Hosan Kuh ; and in grandeur of situation his tomb matches his life. High up the cliff face the door to the sepulchre has pillars before it suggesting a palace entrance. The throne above is supported by two rows of figures representing the nations of the empire, and upon the throne platform stands the great king paying homage to the great god Ahuramazda.<sup>1</sup>

Of all this magnificence Alexander was now master. When he took his place under the golden canopy upon the throne where once Darius sat the Persians recognized him as their new monarch, and Demaratus of Corinth, Philip's old servant, bursting into tears, cried, 'How great a joy have those Greeks lost, who never lived to see this day !' One act of the great drama was almost over, and Alexander's part as champion of Hellas against Persia was drawing to its end. But before he entered upon his new rôle of King of Asia he thought that some symbolic act was necessary to show that he now had the power, if he wished,

<sup>1</sup> See illustration.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

to take vengeance for all the wrongs that had been done in the past to Greece. Xerxes had destroyed the Acropolis at Athens with fire, and he decided that he would exact repayment at Persepolis. Parmenio, who as usual played the part of Sancho Panza to Alexander's Don Quixote, tried to dissuade him and pointed out that it was foolish to burn one's own property ; but Alexander saw rightly that the moral effect would more than compensate for any material loss, and at his orders the torch was set to one of the palaces, and after burning for a time the fire, again at his orders, was extinguished.

Such were the real motives of his much-debated act. But Cleitarchus, who wrote the romantic *Life of Alexander* which Plutarch used, had little use for sober truth and much preferred the embellishments of his own imagination, so that in Plutarch we have the following account :

‘ It chanced that Alexander consented to take part in a merry drinking bout of his companions, at which women also came to meet their lovers and shared in their wine and revelry. The most famous among these women was Thais, an Athenian, the mistress of Ptolemy, who was afterwards king. She, partly in graceful praise of Alexander, and partly to make sport of him, as the drinking went on, was moved to utter a speech which befitted the character of her native country, but was too lofty for one of her kind. She said, namely, that for all her hardships in wandering over Asia she was being requited that day by thus luxuriously revelling in the splendid palace of the Persians ; but it would be a still greater pleasure to go in revel rout and set fire to the house of Xerxes who burned Athens she

## THE TREASURE CITIES

herself kindling the fire under the eyes of Alexander in order that a tradition might prevail among men that the women in the train of Alexander inflicted a greater punishment upon the Persians on behalf of Hellas than all her famous commanders by land and sea. As soon as she had thus spoken tumultuous applause arose, and the companions of the king eagerly urged him on, so that he yielded to their desires, and leaping to his feet, with a garland on his head and a torch in his hand, led them the way.’<sup>1</sup>

The English traveller, Sir Thomas Herbert, who visited Persepolis in 1628 and gives an eloquent account of its marvels, follows Plutarch: <sup>2</sup> ‘But alas! this rich and lovely city, yea the palace itself, albeit they forced admiration and deserved commendation from the Greeks, nevertheless at a drunken feast in a debauched humour by the instigation of Thais, an infamous strumpet then following the camp, to retaliate what Xerxes had in a hostile way perpetrated while he was at Athens, her native place, Alexander commanded—nay helped—to set all on fire; so that nothing now remains save what the merciless fire could not devour—I mean the walls and pavements, which being of marble and by expert masons hewn out of the main rock, and by rare artificers carved into stony and grotesque work, have hitherto resisted air and weather; so as if not defaced by barbarous hammers and hands, it probably will remain a monument to express the old Persian magnificence unto all succeeding generations.’

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Alexander*, 38 (tr. B. Perrin).

<sup>2</sup> Herbert, *Travels*, p. 86 (Routledge, 1928).

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

And so Dryden in '*Alexander's Feast*' :

“ Revenge, revenge ! ” Timotheus cries ;

“ See the Furies arise ;

See the snakes that they rear,

How they hiss in their hair,

And the sparkles that flash from their eyes !

Behold a ghastly band,

Each a torch in his hand !

Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain,

And unburied remain

Inglorious on the plain :

Give the vengeance due

To the valiant crew

Behold how they toss their torches on high,

How they point to the Persian abodes,

And glittering temples of their hostile gods.”

The princes applaud with a furious joy ;

And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy ;

Thais led the way,

To light him to his prey,

And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.’

## CHAPTER X

### KING OF ASIA

**A**T Persepolis Alexander found a treasure three times as great as that which he had seized at Susa, its value amounting in our currency to about forty-three millions, while from the Palace of Cyrus at Pasargadæ he got another two millions. For the first two months of 330 his men were allowed a much needed rest ; but in the early spring he set out once more, this time going north-westwards to the last of the Persian capitals, Ecbatana, the modern Hamadan. There Darius had taken refuge after Arbela, and there about two thousand of the Greek mercenaries and the Bactrians under Bessus had joined him, so that he had again the nucleus of an army. On his march, which led him past the spot where Ispahan now stands, Alexander received news that the Persians meant to offer battle, and at once hastened forward to meet them. But the Scythians who had promised Darius help, at the last moment refused to fight ; and once again the unfortunate monarch lost heart and fled. Alexander pressed on by forced marches, but when he reached Ecbatana Darius had gone.

His baggage train had been unable to keep up with the speed of Alexander's advance, for in it were twenty thousand mules and three thousand camels



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

laden with the combined spoils of Susa, Persepolis and Pasargadæ. The gold and silver, totalling eventually to sixty-three millions, was deposited in the citadel of Ecbatana and handed over to the care of Harpalus, who hitherto had been in charge of the army chest and was now appointed imperial treasurer. Instructions were given him to establish a mint and to start the issue of gold staters and silver tetradrachms with all speed, so as to give effective employment to the masses of bullion which the Persian kings had for so long jealously hoarded. Of all the services which Alexander rendered to the ancient world this establishment of a plentiful currency was one of the greatest ; and the expansion of trade that resulted from it gave the Hellenistic civilization a material prosperity which the Hellenic never enjoyed.

The treasure thus stored at Ecbatana was so great that a strong protecting force was necessary, and Parmenio, somewhat against his will, was left behind to guard the town and secure communications with the west, while Alexander himself took up the chase of the fugitive king. It was discovered that Darius had followed the road which leads to Iran by way of Rhagæ, near the modern Teheran, and the Caspian Gates ; and as he had a long start the utmost speed was required if he was to be overtaken. His company was still a considerable force, some ten thousand infantry and cavalry, so that Alexander took with him all his Macedonian and mercenary horse, the light armed Agrianians, and the archers, and hastened along the Iran road. Many of his men foundered their

## KING OF ASIA

horses before they reached Rhagæ, with such fury did he ride, but when he got there he heard that Darius was already the other side of the Caspian Gates, and that the way for the next eight miles was through the roughest of country. For the moment, therefore, he thought it best to stop, and while he was resting at Rhagæ events occurred in the Persian camp some ten miles east of the Gates which changed the whole situation.

Up till this time the great Persian nobles had remained wonderfully faithful to their king, and many of them were with him even in this last retreat. But to the fiercer spirits among them, and especially to Bessus, satrap of Bactria, it had become obvious that the inherent weakness of Darius' character left them little chance of success, even if they were able to reach the far eastern provinces for which they were making. Accordingly they took a bold step, and when Darius at a council of war proposed to give Alexander battle, Nabarzanes suggested that Bessus, who was of royal blood, should take the king's place and assume the royal tiara, at least until the invader was beaten. Darius drew his dagger in rage, Nabarzanes had to make his escape, and for that day nothing more was done. The aged satrap Artabazus warned Darius that treachery was impending, the commander of the Greek mercenaries begged him to put himself under their protection; but Darius paid no heed, and a few nights later, the conspirators forced their way into his tent, bound him hand and foot, and thrusting him into a chariot set off eastwards at full speed,

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

accompanied by their own men and by most of the Persian troops. The Greek mercenaries withdrew to the Caspian and afterwards surrendered to Alexander : those Persians, satraps and soldiers, who had refused to follow Bessus returned at once to Alexander and told him of what had happened.

When they met him Alexander had passed the Caspian Gates and was preparing to cross the steppe to Hecatompylos, where the main roads from Hyrcania, Bactria, and Arcia meet. As soon as he received the news he set off with his light cavalry, rode all through the night, and after a few hours' rest at midday continued the pursuit. The next morning he reached the place where Darius had been seized four days before, and was told that Bessus had gone northwards. The third night was again spent in the saddle, and in the morning he was in the village where the conspirators had bivouacked the previous day. The villagers told him that it was possible to take a shorter road than that which Bessus had chosen if he was willing to run the risk of going without water, and putting five hundred of his best men on the best remaining horses, he started at once.

At this last stage his men suffered terribly from thirst, and a story is told of Alexander which recalls our Philip Sidney. Some of the older soldiers found a little water and brought it to him in a helmet. 'For whom did you get this?' he asked them, and they replied: 'For our sons; but if thou livest we can get other sons, even if we lose these.' Alexander took the helmet, but when he looked round and saw

## KING OF ASIA

the craving look on his men's faces he handed it back and cried : ' I cannot drink alone.' For the fourth night they rode across the desert and at dawn saw the fugitives before them. But when the first Macedonians reached the closed waggon in which Darius lay, they found that he had been stabbed by his captors and was at the last gasp. A soldier gave him a drink of water, and he murmured : ' Friend, it is the extremity of my misfortune that I receive kindness at your hands and cannot return it. But Alexander will requite you for your good offices, and the gods will requite Alexander for his generosity to my mother, wife and children. To him, through you, I give this right hand.' With the words he clasped the man's hand and expired ; so that when Alexander came up nothing was left for him to do but to cover the body with his own royal mantle and send it down to Persepolis for burial.

Alexander was always the favourite of fortune ; but he was never more fortunate than on this occasion, when his rival was thus removed from his path. To have put Darius to death would have been a painful, an invidious, and yet a necessary task ; for if he had been allowed to live, even as a prisoner, he would inevitably have been a rallying point for the discontented and a dangerous incentive to revolt. His death at a traitor's hand left Alexander only the honourable duty of avenging him, and in waging the next campaign he could rightly say that he was exacting the just penalties due from those who had murdered their king. That king's place he had by

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

right of conquest taken, and now that the last of the Achæmenids had passed away, there was no one to dispute the title 'King of Asia,' which had been given to him after Arbela by the assembly of the Macedonian army.

From this time a new phase in his career begins ; for henceforth he considered that he had a triple obligation to fulfil. He was king of Macedonia, head of the League of Corinth, and ruler of all the nations who formed the Persian empire. To Macedonians, Greeks, and Asiatics, he felt that he owed a like duty, and it was his ultimate object to fuse all three into a world empire where all men should have equal rights of citizenship. It was a wise and benevolent conception and it was not impossible to put it into effect ; but it was not easy. There is a folly inherent in human nature, which in modern jargon is called the superiority complex, and this folly Alexander had painfully to overcome. The Macedonians considered themselves to be as superior to the Persians in the ordinary affairs of life as they had shown themselves to be on the battle-field. One Macedonian is worth ten Persians, they said to themselves ; and by constant repetition the assertion in their minds became a proved fact. The Greeks were somewhat more reasonable, but they also stood on their dignity as free men who would never bow to a despot, and were inclined to think of the Persians as barbarians marked out by nature to be slaves. As for the Persians themselves, even they had their grievance : they had been the ruling caste in Asia and were now put on a level with

## KING OF ASIA

Babylonians, Syrians, Bactrians, and all the other peoples outside the pale. The situation which Alexander had to face was much the same as that which holds to-day in India, where the Brahmans consider themselves superior to all other Indians, the Indo-Europeans consider themselves superior to any sort of Indian whatsoever, and the British consider themselves superior to everyone.

In the summer of 330, however, these difficulties did not perhaps seem formidable; and in any case Alexander was too busy with military affairs to be able to give much thought to the political situation. That summer he spent mainly at Zadracarta, close to the southern end of the Caspian Sea, and there he proceeded to reorganize his army with a view to the campaign in Iran which had now become inevitable. He had before this sent back home the Thessalian cavalry and the other contingents supplied by the Greek allies; for the war of revenge against Persia was over, and it was as king of Asia that he was going to win back the far eastern provinces whose satraps had revolted from him. Any of the Greeks who wished were allowed to remain, and many of them preferred the perils and prizes of warfare to inglorious ease: but they stayed as mercenaries and not as allies. The fifteen hundred Greeks, who had remained with Darius till the end and now surrendered at discretion, were also permitted to join the Macedonian army, and Alexander welcomed to his camp the faithful satraps, Artabazus and his son Ariobarzanes, Phrataphernes,

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

and Autophradates, and treated them as honoured counsellors.

His next step was to make the changes in army organization which were required by the new sort of fighting that lay before him. Hitherto he had been faced by a regular army, stiffened by Greek mercenaries drawn up in phalanx, and the tactics he had used in his three pitched battles followed on the lines that Philip had laid down. But he was now faced by entirely new conditions, and even those who are inclined to depreciate his military genius must acknowledge the skill with which he altered his machine. It was now a question of catching small bodies of irregular troops scattered over wide stretches of mountainous country, and the first essential was to have a mobile force, capable of swift aggressive action and easily divisible. With a view to this the heavy cavalry of the Companions had already been split up into sixteen squadrons instead of eight and the number of commanding officers correspondingly increased; and in the operations of the next few years two or more of these squadrons were constantly used as nucleus of an attacking column moving independently of the main army and consisting of troops of all arms. The number of light-armed men, slingers and archers was also considerably increased by calling up native troops, and to compensate for the departure of the Thessalians a levy of thirty thousand young Persians was ordered, who were to be trained in Macedonian fashion and sent into service when they were fit.

These arrangements, and the promise of further

## KING OF ASIA

fighting which they entailed, met with little favour from a considerable section of the Macedonian officers. They were rough soldiers for the most part, and they thought that the time had come to divide the spoils of conquered Asia, to return to Macedonia, and there to enjoy the rewards of victory. Alexander had been hailed as King of Asia after Arbela by the army assembly ; but to many of the senior commanders he was still only king of Macedonia, their feudal lord ; and their loyalty to him was strictly conditioned by the proviso that he should always consider them first and make their interests his own. While Alexander did all he could to gain the affection of the Persians and make them forget defeat, these Macedonians thought that victory gave them the right to tyrannize over the vanquished. While Alexander graciously received the homage which the Asiatics on bended knee offered to him as their king, the Macedonians thought that it would be more proper to make them crawl in the dust before their feet. They criticized Alexander bitterly for wearing Persian dress on occasions of ceremony where Persians were present, but they did not hesitate to borrow habits of luxury from the very people whom they despised.

Plutarch gives us some details of the extravagance in which the younger men at least indulged ; how one had silver nails upon his boots, and another ordered special dust for wrestling to be sent to him from Egypt ; how at the royal table they readily devoured expensive dainties while Alexander himself was content with a little fruit. Instead of olive oil they used



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

myrrh and employed professional masseurs, so that Alexander would scornfully ask them how they hoped to care for their horses properly if they could not rub their own dear selves down. Their leader's munificence supplied them with resources such as they had never possessed before, and although Olympias in frequent letters warned her son against his misplaced generosity, Alexander persisted in showering wealth upon them.

But nothing that Alexander could do was able to dispel the discontent that began to rankle in the minds of the older men. The favour which he showed to Artabazus seemed a personal slight to themselves, and the thought that Persians were considered their equals was an intolerable grievance. To Parmenio especially the idea of training Persian recruits was as offensive as a proposal to admit natives of Sierra Leone to the Grenadier Guards would have been to the late Duke of Cambridge. Hitherto the old soldier had contented himself with criticism and advice, advice which was usually rejected; but he probably now thought that Alexander had lost his senses, and he gave at least a tacit consent to the plot which his son Philotas formed.

Philotas seems to have been a thoroughly disagreeable person, boastful, arrogant, and vain. Slightly older than Alexander, he was accustomed in suitable company to speak of his king as a foolish young stripling who was indebted to himself and his father for all the victories he had gained. In Syria in 331 he had

## KING OF ASIA

gone further, and to the fair Greek Antigone, who had been taken prisoner at Damascus and appropriated as his mistress, he often uttered angry threats of what he would some day do. All this came at the time to Alexander's ears, for Antigone reported her master's indiscretions to Craterus; but whether from indifference or from magnanimity he took no steps, and Philotas as Commander of the Companions remained one of the highest and most greatly favoured of all his officers.

Arbela, however, was the cause of a decisive change of feeling; for in that battle Alexander considered that neither Parmenio nor Philotas had played the part which he expected of them. He punished Parmenio's failure to hold the Persian right wing in check by leaving him behind at Ecbatana when he went eastwards; and by the new organization of the Companions which was now being planned, Philotas saw that he would lose his pre-eminent position. Both father and son therefore had a personal grievance, and when after the death of Darius, Alexander was recognized by the Persian satraps as Great King and accepted their homage as lord of Asia, Philotas felt that the time had come to pass from threats to action. He began to form plans to murder the man whom he professed to serve and chose as his agent a certain Macedonian named Limnus, who had a private grudge against the king. He told this man that there was a general feeling among the senior officers of the army that the despot must be removed: if Limnus would do the deed, he would be suit-

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

ably rewarded and would receive thanks instead of punishment.

Limnus revealed all this to a friend without mentioning Philotas' name, and added boastfully that in three days Alexander would be no more. The friend, Nicomachus, terrified by the news and neither willing nor able to keep such a secret, told his brother Cebalinus, who set off at once to the royal quarters and asked for an interview with Philotas who on that day was in command of the guard. To Philotas he told what he had heard, and begged him to warn the king of the danger which threatened. Philotas, however, neither that day nor the next, said anything to Alexander, although he was frequently in his company. On the third day Cebalinus became suspicious, and remembering the threat which Limnus had used got into touch with Metron, one of the royal pages, who at his urgent entreaty brought him into the room where Alexander was taking his bath. He was ordered to tell his tale then and there ; and when the king had heard it he gave instructions that Limnus should be arrested immediately and brought into his presence. An officer of the guard went off only to return a little while later with the news that Limnus was dead, having been killed in endeavouring to escape arrest.

Alexander at once saw that the situation was more dangerous even than he had feared, for the death of Limnus meant that Philotas had managed to destroy the plainest evidence of his guilt. He decided to go cautiously. Philotas was summoned, and when he

## KING OF ASIA

denied all knowledge of Limnus, Alexander accepted his word and invited him to dinner that night. Meanwhile he sent for Hephæstion, and five other of the chief officers in whom he had most confidence, laid all the facts before them, and with their help decided what he would do. The dinner went off as usual; but after the other guests had gone home, Alexander's six confidants returned, and orders were given to a troop of soldiers to march to Philotas' quarters, guard all the approaches, arrest Philotas himself, and bring him back as a prisoner to the king. As a further precaution, Hephæstion saw to it that the gates of the town, and especially that which led to Ecbatana, were kept closed all the night. The next morning the whole army to its extreme surprise was called together to act in the old Macedonian fashion as high court of justice. Alexander himself informed the soldiers that a plot against his life had been discovered; Nicomachus, Cebalinus and Metron gave their evidence; and the dead body of Limnus was carried forward as confirmation of their words. Then the king revealed the fact that Philotas, who had been informed of the danger and said nothing, was the real instigator of the plot, and that Parmenio, who had warned his son not to make himself too conspicuous, was also cognisant of the affair. He told the men how he had heard of Philotas' boastful threats in the previous year and had forgiven him; and at the conclusion of his speech Philotas was brought out in chains. So fierce was the indignation against him that some prepared at once to stone him to death;

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

but Alexander insisted that he should be allowed to speak, and himself left the assembly. Thereupon, Philotas again firmly denied his guilt, and expatiated on the services which he and his father had rendered. But when he went on to declare that the real motive of the charge brought against him was the fear and hatred which tyrants always show towards merit, he was stopped by shouts of angry protest, and the assembly passed sentence of death upon him and his associates.

Even so Alexander had compunction and felt that he would not be satisfied unless Philotas confessed his guilt. A secret council of the chief officers was held where most of those present voted for an immediate execution. Hephæstion, however, with Craterus and Cœnus, husband of Philotas' sister, proposed that the culprit should first be put to the torture, and when the others agreed these three undertook themselves to be present in the torture room. That night Philotas was put on the rack, and under stress of pain confessed that he and his father in the past had discussed the question of Alexander's removal, but had deferred action until the death of Darius, thinking that the Persians alone would gain. Of the present plot he persisted that Parmenio had no knowledge. From this nothing could move him: but his own guilt was plain, and fortified by his admission, Alexander the next morning had him brought before the assembled army, and there according to Macedonian custom he was transfixed by the soldiers' spears.

## KING OF ASIA

There still remained the difficulty of Parmenio's position. If he was privy to his son's plot, as Alexander still believed, the sentence of death passed by the army on all Philotas' confederates must be executed upon him. And even if there was some doubt in his case, both Alexander and his advisers well knew how deeply he was attached to his son, and were certain that he would not let his death go unavenged if he had the power to strike. It was painful to execute an old man who had done good service under Philip and under Alexander; but he had a strong force with him, and it was rightly thought that to spare one life meant condemning hundreds of men to a violent end in battle. The decision was given against him, and three messengers on swift dromedaries were sent off to Ecbatana, who in twelve days did the journey that usually took forty. There they handed the death warrant, sealed by Alexander himself, to the old general's two chief subordinates, and Parmenio was executed.

So ended a lamentable business, of which the only good thing that can be said is that it cleared the air; for the swift punishment dealt out to the traitors showed all possible malcontents that it was no Darius now with whom they had to deal. If a cancerous growth has attacked the body, to use the knife may be painful but often it is the only means of safety; and there can be little doubt that the cancer of disaffection would have spread among the men if vigorous measures had not been taken against the leaders. Moreover, although the execution of Parmenio has sometimes

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

been called a judicial murder, it must be remembered that the verdict against him was passed not by Alexander but by the whole army sitting as the high court of Macedonia, and that they had evidence before them which we do not possess.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE IRANIAN CAMPAIGNS

**I**RAN is the general name now given to the great plateau which has the plain of the Tigris on its west side and the valley of the Indus on the east. To the north it is bounded by the Caspian Sea and the Turanian desert, to the south by the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean; in its centre there is a vast salt desert and it is completely surrounded by high mountain ranges. It was the original home of the Persians, who had settled there in the second millennium B.C. when the other Nordic peoples went on their way to India; and it was here that Zoroaster first announced his doctrine of the two powers of light and darkness who rule the world. On its western confines lay the three oldest cities of the empire, Ecbatana, Pasargadæ and Persepolis: on the north-east, where Alexander was to have a hard struggle for three years, the fighting strength which had once made Persia so formidable was at this time concentrated. This district, which formed the three satrapies of Areia, Bactria and Sogdiana, appears in our maps as Afghanistan, Bokhara, and Western Turkestan: but it is now seldom visited, and no European army save Alexander's has ever marched and fought amid its inhospitable wastes.



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

The discovery of Philotas' conspiracy was made in the autumn of 330 at Phrada, the fortified palace of Barsaentes, satrap of Drangiana. On leaving Zadracarta in pursuit of Bessus, Alexander had marched along the Persian royal road through Parthia into Areia, where he was told that Bessus had reached Bactria, had assumed the upright tiara, which was the Persian sign of monarchy, and taken the title of Great King. This he heard from Satibarzanes, satrap of Areia, who was really in league with Bessus but now made pretence of submission, and therefore had his province restored to him. Thinking that his communications were safe, Alexander proceeded southwards, but on the road received the unpleasant news that Satibarzanes had thrown off his disguise and that all Areia was in arms behind him. Marching back at full speed he reached the satrap's palace at Artacoana in two days. But Satibarzanes had already taken fright and made his escape to Bessus, and after crushing the revolt and founding Alexandria in Areia, the modern Herat, Alexander again went down the southern road to Drangiana. On his approach Barsaentes, whose submission he had expected, fled to the Indians of Arachosia, but was taken prisoner by them, surrendered and executed; and it was while still smarting under the treachery of these two men that Alexander had to deal with Philotas.

At Phrada a new city was founded which was afterwards called Prophthasia, 'Anticipation,' in allusion to the conspiracy. But this year there was no time for the army to rest in winter quarters. From Dran-

## THE IRANIAN CAMPAIGNS

giana Alexander passed at once into Arachosia, where he founded Alexandria of the Arachosians, the modern Kandahar, and then marched over the mountains into the Kabul valley. His men suffered severely from snow blindness, but in the valley they obtained abundant provisions, and after a short halt prepared to cross the Hindu Kush into Bactria by way of the Panjshir-Khawak pass. Bessus had laid the whole country waste, and the Macedonians were compelled to slaughter their beasts of burden for food and to gather the green silphium that grew upon the hill sides. But at last the huge barrier was conquered, and by a swift and unexpected march Alexander got to the north of Tashkurgan, where Bessus was waiting for him, and so turned his position.

Nothing was left for Bessus but to retreat beyond the Oxus, and this he did in all haste. Alexander for his part rested for a few weeks at Bactra, and then again took up the pursuit. It was now the early summer of 329, and in their march towards the Oxus the troops suffered as much from the heat as they had previously suffered from the cold. Bessus had destroyed all the boats, and as the river was very broad with treacherous currents and a bed of shifting sand, it was impossible to construct a bridge, so that finally the army got across native fashion by filling skins with reeds and paddling over while their horses swam by their side.

But when they reached the northern bank they found that there was no need for further effort and

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

that the chase was almost over. A message came from Spitamenes, satrap of Sogdiana, who had been assisting the Bactrian leader, that he had put Bessus in chains and was willing to surrender him. Ptolemy was sent forward with a cavalry column, and although Spitamenes meanwhile changed his mind and retired out of reach, the prisoner was secured and brought back to Alexander. It was judged that a regicide deserved signal punishment, and after being flogged and put in the pillory he was sent down to Bactra where later he was judged by his equals and sentenced to death by being torn asunder between two trees. Of the justice of this cruel sentence there have been two opinions ; for whether Bessus was merely an ambitious man who wished to usurp kingship or an ardent patriot who gallantly strove to resist a foreign invader is a question which historians have found it hard to decide.

From the Oxus Alexander pushed on to Maracanda, the modern Samarcand, one of the two Persian royal residences in Sogdiana, Bokhara being the other. At Maracanda he left a garrison and thence marched to the river Jaxartes, the extreme limit of the Persian Empire on the north-east. But meanwhile Spitamenes, after some hesitation, had decided to put himself at the head of a national revolt, which broke out first in the district known as the Seven Forts. Alexander had to return and attack the first of these places, a village called Gaza, which he took by storm and massacred all the inhabitants. The next four strongholds met the same fate, and he then advanced on

## THE IRANIAN CAMPAIGNS

Cyropolis, the most important of the seven. His siege engines were brought up, but while they were battering the walls he noticed that the river which ran through the place was dry, and that it was possible to enter along its bed. He himself with a few picked men made a way in unobserved, and threw open one of the gates for the rest to join them. A furious struggle within the walls followed, in which both Alexander and Craterus were wounded. But there could be only one result; and at last, when eight thousand men had been killed, the Sogdians surrendered.

Alexander then returned to the Jaxartes, where he founded Alexandria Eschate, the modern Khodjend, building its walls in twenty days, while the nomad tribes of the Massagetæ and Scythians assembled on the other side of the river and threatened an attack. Such presumption, Alexander thought, required a lesson; and bringing up his catapults he opened a heavy fire across the stream. The nomads, unused to artillery, retired in disorder, and crossing the river with his archers ahead Alexander advanced upon them. They tried the encircling tactics, which three hundred years later were used against Crassus at Carrhæ, riding round and shooting as they went. But Alexander's javelin men and archers kept them in check, and when the heavy cavalry charged they broke and fled. Alexander chased them for some time, but some foul water which he drank brought on an attack of dysentery, and he had to be carried back to camp and the pursuit abandoned.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

These operations had taken some time, and Spitamenes used the opportunity of Alexander's absence to start a second rising on a larger scale. Obtaining a force of horsemen from the Massagetæ who roamed the deserts north of the Oxus, he attacked Maracanda, and when the garrison under the Lycian Pharnaces sallied out against him, he encircled them with his cavalry and cut them down to a man. The news of the disaster reached Alexander soon after he had left the Jaxartes, and riding with the Companions, archers, and a portion of the phalanx infantry, he did the journey of one hundred and thirty-five miles in just over three days. Spitamenes retreated once more into the desert, and Alexander, after devastating all the surrounding country, went into winter quarters at Bactra.

In the spring of 328 Alexander left Bactra for Maracanda, and it was at army headquarters there that the calamity of Cleitus' death occurred. Cleitus, Black Cleitus as he was usually called, was one of Alexander's closest intimates. They were of the same age, had been nursed together, and had fought together in every campaign. At the Granicus Cleitus had saved Alexander's life, at Issus he had served with distinction, and at Arbela he had held the post of danger on the extreme right wing. For these great services he had received from Alexander equally great rewards. Gifts of money had been showered upon him; when the Companions were reorganized he became one of the two hipparchs in command of the whole force, with a thousand men under his

## THE IRANIAN CAMPAIGNS

orders ; and after the death of Bessus he was put in charge of Bactria. He should have been content, but he was not, for his mind was embittered by two fixed ideas ; the first, a patriotic hatred of all Greeks and Persians, the second, an ignoble jealousy of Alexander's exploits. Of these the first was openly vaunted, the second he usually kept concealed ; and between them, aided by his violent temper, they brought him to his death.

The circumstances of the tragedy were as follows. A convoy had come in to Maracanda bringing some choice fruit and wine, and Alexander thought it was a good opportunity to give one of those convivial banquets which his officers so greatly appreciated. Army headquarters was a little world in itself, where Macedonian generals rubbed elbows with Persian nobles, Greek rhetoricians, Phœnician contractors, and all the other varied company that gathers at the fount of power. To the feast representatives of every class were invited, and when the drinking had been going on some time, one of the guests began to sing a song making fun of the Macedonian commanders who had recently met with reverses at the hands of the mountain tribes. Alexander smiled at the jest ; but Cleitus, who had been drinking heavily of the strong Turkestan wine, cried out that it was disgraceful for foreign civilians to ridicule good soldiers who had met with bad luck. 'Bad luck,' retorted Alexander, 'is only another word for lack of courage'; and at that Cleitus could no longer restrain himself. 'Lack of courage!' he shouted. 'Who was it that saved

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

your life at the Granicus when you had turned your back to the enemy? And yet to-day we Macedonians have to beg from Persian chamberlains the privilege of an interview with the son of Ammon!’

The whole room was now in an uproar, and Alexander, turning to some Greeks who were near him, asked them if they did not feel like demi-gods among a herd of wild animals. Cleitus saw his movement, and insolently bade him to say openly what he had in mind, if he wished for the company of free men. Thereupon Alexander also lost all control, and flinging an apple from the table at Cleitus’ face, felt behind him for his sword. An attendant, however, had taken the precaution to remove it, and when the king commanded the trumpeter of the guards to sound the call for the regiment to come to him, the man hesitated and did not obey the order at once. Alexander struck him a violent blow; and it is possible that the disturbance might have ended, for meanwhile the chief cause of the tumult had been hustled out of the room. But just at that moment Cleitus forced his way back by another door, and putting his head round the curtain began to shout fresh insults. His words goaded Alexander to madness. Seizing a spear from one of the soldiers he ran him through the body, and with a roar and a groan Cleitus fell dead at his feet.

The next moment Alexander came to himself, and drawing out the spear would have pierced his own throat if his men had not laid hands upon him and

## THE IRANIAN CAMPAIGNS

carried him away by force. For a whole day and night he took neither food nor drink, crying out continually and reproaching himself for his crime. At last the violence of his grief left him exhausted, and he lay motionless on his bed, groaning so bitterly that his officers became alarmed. Nothing that they could say, however, was of any use, and at last they called in the army soothsayers and the Greek philosophers to help. The soothsayers gave him some consolation by enumerating the evil omens which they had noticed before the banquet, and pointed out that Dionysus, angered at a slight which had been put upon him, was the real cause of Cleitus' death. The philosopher Anaxarchus completed the cure, when he reminded him that a god could do no wrong, and that it was unbecoming for a divine being to give way to excessive lamentation.

All this happened in the early part of 338 when Alexander, his army divided into five columns, was sweeping Sogdiana and establishing lines of block-houses in an endeavour to dispose finally of Spitamenes. But that great fighter was very hard to beat, and on one occasion actually took Bactra by surprise and slaughtered its weak garrison. In the autumn he was still at large, and Alexander then left Cœnus in western Sogdiana to deal with him, and went into winter quarters at Nautaka, where presently he received news that Cœnus had brought him and his allies the Massagetæ to a pitched battle and won a decisive victory. Thereupon the Massagetæ abandoned the struggle,



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

cut off Spitamenes' head, and sent it in as a sign of their submission.

Even so, however, Alexander only held the plain country of Sogdiana: four great princes, Oxyartes, Chorienes, Catanes, and Austanes, were still in possession of their mountain fastnesses, and they were prepared to resist to the last. Accordingly in January 327, Alexander set out to attack Oxyartes in the stronghold known as the Sogdian Rock. This fortress was a huge mass of rock rising sheer from the valley, its sides so precipitous that an assault seemed impossible. It was strongly occupied and Oxyartes was so confident of its strength that he had left his wife and daughters there while he went to raise a fresh levy in the mountains. Provisions were stored sufficient to last for several months, and the frequent snow-storms both supplied the garrison with water and also rendered approach very difficult. When Alexander sent an envoy to demand surrender, offering in return a safe passage home for all, the tribesmen with barbaric laughter replied that he would have to bring up flying soldiers if he meant to capture the place: they feared no man unless he had wings.

Alexander had seen other fortresses which were thought to be impregnable, and yet had fallen into his hands. The Macedonians were already eager to make the attempt, but he roused them still more by offering two thousand pounds to the first man who reached the summit of the rock, and lesser prizes to all the rest. About three hundred men, who had practised rock-climbing in the previous sieges, at once

## THE IRANIAN CAMPAIGNS

volunteered, and taking their iron tent pegs with ropes attached, set out under cover of darkness for the face of the rock. Driving in the pegs wherever there was a crevice in the stone, they climbed painfully upwards, and although thirty fell into the deep snow-drifts at the base and were never seen again, the rest reached the summit at daybreak and waved a flag to show that they had succeeded. Thereupon Alexander sent a herald to the first outpost, and pointing to the top of the rock, bade them surrender immediately for his flying soldiers now commanded their position. When the tribesmen turned they saw the Macedonian flag waving above their heads, and thinking that the whole army was there they allowed Alexander to pass up the one possible approach which they had been set to defend. So the Sogdian Rock was taken.

The booty captured in the fort was considerable ; but of greater value than any money were the women prisoners. Alexander treated them with his usual courtesy and kindness, and when Oxyartes heard that they were in his hands, he came in of his own accord and not only surrendered himself, but offered to serve as an intermediary with the other Sogdian princes who were still in arms. In his company, although it was mid-winter, Alexander set out at once for the stronghold of Chorienes, forcing his way through defiles buried deep in snow amid fierce storms of wind, rain and hail. Provisions were scarce and the cold was terrible : but the men were kept in good heart by Alexander's example, for their leader faced all hard-

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

ships and privations under exactly the same conditions as the rank and file. One night he was resting for a moment by a bivouac fire, when an old soldier, half-frozen with the cold, stumbled up to the blaze. Alexander handed him his own camp stool on which the man sat down while the king stood beside him. Soon the veteran's senses were revived by the warmth, and looking up, he saw to his dismay that his companion was the king. He stammered some words of apology, but Alexander said with a smile : 'Comrade, to sit upon the king's seat is for a Persian a crime that brings death. But happily in your case my stool has brought you back to life.'

At last they reached the stronghold, perhaps the modern Hissar-Schadman, and found that it was perched upon a broad ledge of rock at the side of a deep and narrow gorge through which a rushing torrent ran. Even to approach was difficult ; but for Alexander difficulties were only meant to be overcome. He ordered his men to cut down the pine trees which grew thick on the mountain side, and with them to cover over the stream. Masses of earth were then piled upon the timber, and gradually a mound was made which rose to the same height as the fortress, and brought the enemy under a direct fire. Chorienes, who at first had looked on carelessly while the Macedonians were working, realized that he was caught in a trap and sent a herald to Alexander asking that he might be allowed to parley with Oxyartes. The interview which he had with his old companion in arms settled his doubts, and the next day he

## THE IRANIAN CAMPAIGNS

surrendered at discretion, received from Alexander a free pardon, and in return, from his stores supplied the Macedonians with wine and provisions for two months.

Catanes and Austanes still remained : but they gave little trouble, and when Alexander returned to Bactra in the spring all Sogdiana was subdued. It had been a gallant struggle on both sides, for the Sogdian, like his modern descendant, was a first-class fighting man ; and Alexander expressed his appreciation of courage by introducing Greek civilization into the country. The new cities which he founded were his first efforts at colonizing in Asia, and were also the first urban centres that Sogdiana and Bactria had ever possessed ; for such places as Maracanda and Bactra were, until his arrival, mere villages huddled round a royal residence. Of his colonies and their effect in later history, we shall speak in another chapter ;<sup>1</sup> but there was one immediate step which he took that testifies clearly to his desire to bring his former enemies into the circle of his friends.

We have said that among the captives taken at the Sogdian Rock the wife and daughters of Oxyartes were included. One of the daughters, Roxana, was reputed to be the fairest maiden in all Asia ; and although Alexander treated her with the utmost respect, he was not altogether blind to her beauty. The cessation of fighting naturally brought with it a round of festivities at Bactra : Oxyartes was there, and at one banquet Roxana in company with thirty other virgins

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XV.

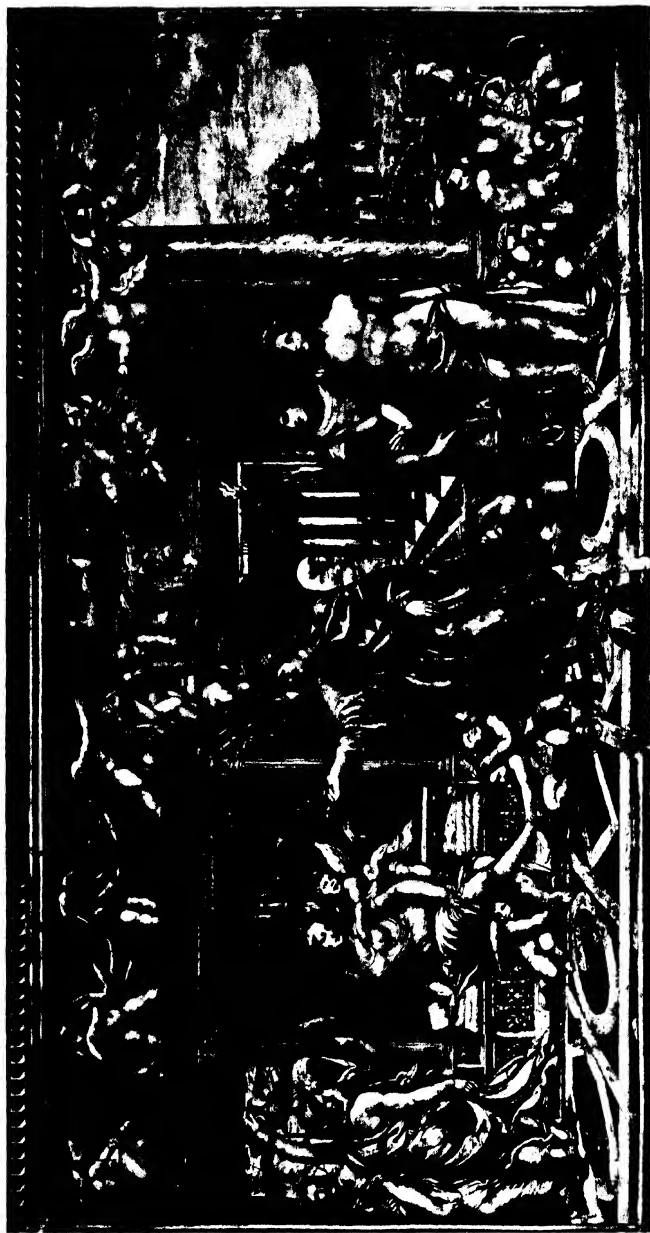
## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

consented to dance before the king. So far did she surpass them all in grace that Alexander decided it was time for him to marry ; and with him, as usual, action followed quick on thought. Oxyartes was overjoyed, and the marriage took place at once, according to the old Iranian ritual which is still observed in Turkestan. A loaf of bread was brought in, which was then cut in two by Alexander's conquering sword, and a portion eaten by bridegroom and by bride. A banquet of a more sumptuous character doubtless followed.

It is unnecessary to enquire too closely whether on this occasion, for the first and only time in his life, Alexander was carried away by tender feelings. He certainly knew that it was necessary for him to have an heir and that the Sogdian women were the mothers of brave men. He knew also that such a marriage would be the most effective means of allaying any bitterness that his conquered foes might still feel. But although these two considerations doubtless influenced him in his decisions, a softer emotion may for the moment have taken him captive. Even the gods in Olympus were not immune to Cupid's shafts, and the contemporary painter was perhaps not altogether mistaken when he pictured a band of little loves hovering above the heads of the bridal pair.

This marriage with an Eastern princess emphasized Alexander's position as king of Asia, and supplied fresh fuel to the fires of discontent which had never quite ceased to smoulder among the Macedonian die-





*Anderson Photo*

THE MARRIAGE OF ROXANA AND ALEXANDER

[face p. 185

## THE IRANIAN CAMPAIGNS

hards. There were some, however, among his closest intimates, who sympathized with his cardinal idea of equal union between Macedonians, Greeks and Persians; and one of them, Hephæstion, now suggested that it would be well to introduce at court functions the Persian custom of *proskynesis*, whereby all who approached the king first prostrated themselves upon the ground and did obeisance to him. To the Persians this act did not mean that they regarded the king as a god, for their religion was monotheistic; it was merely a sign of complete submission to his will. But to the Macedonians, and even more to the Greeks, prostration seemed a denial of their rights as free men: it might be offered to a god, but never to a human being. Its introduction, therefore, was a dangerous experiment, and was at least partly the cause of the conspiracy of the pages, which occurred shortly afterwards, and also of the execution of Callisthenes.

Callisthenes of Olynthus, the nephew of Aristotle, was a man of considerable literary talent but of little common sense. He had appointed himself historian of the expedition to Asia, and is reported to have said that Alexander's fame depended not upon what Alexander did but upon what Callisthenes wrote. His history, on which the later romance of the Pseudo-Callisthenes with all its absurdities was founded, was already under way, and he had sent to Greece that part of it which dealt with events up to 330. In it he related that the oracle of Ammon and the prophetess of Erythræ had both declared Alexander's divine



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

origin ; and also described how before his own eyes the waves of the sea off Mount Climax in Pamphylia had prostrated themselves in homage before the son of Zeus.

Alexander and Hephæstion therefore naturally expected that Callisthenes would be willing to follow the sea's example, and he was included among the guests invited to the banquet where the ceremony was to be performed for the first time. The arrangement was that Alexander should drink from a cup and then hand it to his friends, who were to drink in their turn, fall on the ground before him, and finally receive from him the kiss of friendship, according to Persian custom. Hephæstion took the lead and the others, though with some reluctance, followed. But when it came to Callisthenes' turn, he drank from the cup and stood motionless. Hephæstion called Alexander's attention to his behaviour, the king refused him the ceremonial kiss, and Callisthenes remarking scornfully 'Well, I go away the poorer for a kiss,' walked out of the hall.

His protest was so far a success that prostration was never again required from the Macedonians, and the whole episode bears a curious resemblance to the attempt made by Mark Antony to set a diadem on Cæsar's head at the feast of the Lupercalia. But there is no fury like a monarch scorned, and from that day Callisthenes was marked out as a dangerous traitor. Part of his duty was to act as tutor to the royal pages, a body of high-born Macedonian youths attached to the king's person, who were always in attendance

## THE IRANIAN CAMPAIGNS

and slept at night before the door of his chamber. To these lads in his lectures he had often enlarged in Greek fashion on the honourable duty of killing all tyrants : and one of them, a boy called Hermolaus, just about this time was foolish enough to take his rhetoric seriously.

At a boar hunt Hermolaus had presumed to anticipate Alexander in dealing the quarry its death stroke, and as punishment for his fault was publicly whipped and deprived of his horse. Infuriated by the chastisement he induced some of his companions to join him in a plot to kill the king as he slept. The night was fixed, and all the details arranged ; but Alexander, warned by a Syrian prophetess of impending danger, stayed till morning at a drinking party, and next day the conspiracy was discovered. The pages were brought before the army assembly, acting once more as a military court, and on their confession of guilt were stoned to death. It is said that their confession implicated Callisthenes, but we cannot tell whether this was true. In any case, Callisthenes was arrested, and after being kept for some months in prison, was executed by sentence of a private court of the king's advisers in India.

The execution of Philotas and Parmenio, the death of Cleitus, and the execution of Callisthenes are the dark spots in the glorious history of the Iranian campaigns ; and they were used in later days by the Peripatetic school, of which Callisthenes was a member, as the main grounds for their estimate of Alexander as a vainglorious despot who owed his successes chiefly

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

to luck. But the fact remains that none of these incidents in the least impaired the love and confidence which the army felt in its leader ; and when at last Iran was subdued, the men willingly followed him on the last and greatest of his adventures, the march to India.

## CHAPTER XII

### INDIA

THE Indian expedition has seemed to some historians to have been purely an act of inconsiderate daring, the proof of a recklessly adventurous spirit and an insatiate desire for further conquests. In truth it was the result of the two forces which were always driving Alexander on, his mystical belief in a divine origin, and his ambition to extend the bounds of human knowledge. If he were indeed the son of Zeus, his manifest destiny, like that of the god's other children, was to traverse a path of danger and difficulty in this world and to perform every heroic task presented to him, so that at last he might be worthy of a seat in heaven. Heracles and Dionysus had both ventured into the strange land which lay east of the great mountains, and where they had gone he must go also. This was one reason ; but there was another which may commend itself more to practical minds. In India, if anywhere, the problem of Ocean, which for long had vexed geographers, could be solved. That great water, which the ancients believed to encircle the world, must lie somewhere to the east, and Aristotle thought that it would be visible from the summit of the Indian Parnassus, Paropamisus, the modern Hindu Kush. That this was not so Alexander

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

had already discovered, but he still felt sure that Ocean was not far distant, and that if he went on he would come both to it and to the world's end.

It must be remembered that to the Greeks of Alexander's time the word India meant only the mountains of the north-west frontier and the plain through which the Indus and its tributaries flow. Of the great sub-continent which we call India they had no knowledge, and as regards the north-west corner the little information which they possessed was derived ultimately from Persian sources. The Persians were closely akin to the Nordic tribes who came down with them into Iran and towards the end of the second millennium B.C. established themselves as rulers of all northern India, and it is probable that communications between east and west were always kept up by way of Bactria and Sogdiana, although we have no definite historical information before the sixth century B.C. There is a story that Semiramis, the famous Assyrian queen, invaded the country and on the return journey lost all her men save twenty, and we have some evidence that Cyrus marched over the Hindu Kush into the Kabul valley; but whether he reached the Indus plain is very doubtful.

As regards the expedition of Darius I, however, we have certain knowledge, for two inscriptions at Persepolis tell us that in 518 B.C. the Great King came over the mountains, subdued the plain country, and added all the western Punjab to his empire. This is confirmed by Herodotus, who says that 'India' was the last of the twenty satrapies which Darius

## INDIA

organized, and that its yearly tribute amounted to over a million pounds sterling paid in gold dust.<sup>1</sup> From Herodotus we also learn that Darius sent Scylax to explore the Indus, and that the Greek sailor succeeded in making his way down the river to the Indian Ocean, and after a voyage of two and a half years came back to Egypt. But of Southern India the historian expressly says that it was never subject to Darius, nor does he mention the Ganges ; so that probably the Indian satrapy only comprised the course of the Indus from Kalabagh to the sea, including the whole of Sind and part of the Punjab, the desert of Rajputana forming its southern boundary.

It was from this district that the Indians came who in Xerxes' army met their death at Platæa in 479 B.C., 'the infantry clad in cotton garments, and carrying cane bows and cane arrows, the latter tipped with iron ; the cavalry armed in a similar manner, their chariots drawn by horses and wild asses.'<sup>2</sup> But after the defeat of the great armament in Greece the vigour of Persian government declined, and even if 'India' remained nominally a part of the empire it became practically independent, and at the beginning of the fourth century B.C. was less known to the Greeks than it had been in the time of Xerxes. The information which Herodotus, for example, obtained from his Persian friends was in most cases fairly accurate; but Ctesias of Cnidus, who was court physician to Artaxerxes Mnemon 415-397, and wrote an *Indica*, fills his book with absurdities. The tales told by Scylax

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, III, 94.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, VII, 65, 86.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

of Indians who used their enormous feet as sunshades and wrapped themselves in their own ears are capped by Ctesias with accounts of pygmy tribes, of men who had but one eye, of men who had dogs' heads, and of monstrous animals such as the one which he saw with his own eyes at Susa, a creature with a human face and four legs, larger than the largest lion, which shot stings from its tail. And while Herodotus was almost forgotten by the Greeks of the fourth century Ctesias was eagerly read.

To many of Alexander's soldiers, therefore, India was a land of marvels, the home of strange men and even stranger beasts, and it was possibly with some trepidation that the rank and file made ready to march onwards in the spring of 327. But the philosophers, the historians, and the scientists with the army were eager to seize the opportunity for new discoveries, and their commander had spent the winter in making the military and political arrangements necessary for the success of the great adventure. An heroic exploit appealed to Alexander's imagination; but with him imagination did not overpower reason, and before he undertook a task every detail was carefully considered.

To begin with, the army was once again reorganized to meet the new conditions. Many of the Greek mercenaries had already been left behind in the colonies which had been founded in Sogdiana and most of the rest were marked out to remain in Bactria, so that of the European troops the great majority was now composed of the sturdy Macedonians who had followed their leader across Asia. They formed the

## INDIA

solid core of the army, but with them for the coming campaign were grouped large bodies of Asiatic infantry and cavalry. The heavy cavalry of the Companions, for example, had their numbers raised from two to five thousand, and included many squadrons of Bactrian, Sogdian, and Sacæan horsemen. The phalanx was enlarged from six to ten regiments of a thousand men each, many of the newcomers being Persians. To the corps of mounted javelin men a thousand horse-archers from the Dahæ were added, and when all the new troops were incorporated Alexander had with him an army of about thirty-five thousand, drawn from every part of his empire ; an army which was not only a perfect military instrument but a practical example of the fusion of races in one harmonious whole.

This force was intended for the conquest of India and the completion of Alexander's Asiatic empire. But beside his plans of land warfare Alexander had formed vast schemes of exploration by sea, and for these a fleet was required. He could perhaps have improvised methods for providing himself with ships after his arrival in India, but he preferred to make all his arrangements in good time, and in the autumn of 328 he gave instructions to his officers in Egypt to collect and dispatch to him in Bactria a sufficient number of Egyptian carpenters and coppersmiths. In Phœnicia also he ordered a levy of shipwrights and sailors, who made the journey across Asia with the Egyptian craftsmen, and finally he sent for his friend Nearchus of Crete to take command of the fleet when



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

it should be constructed. How many of these naval auxiliaries there were we do not know, but their numbers must have been considerable, and to them must be added the supply services and the civilians attached to headquarters, while many of the soldiers had wives and children with them. Greek authors give the total of Alexander's expeditionary force as one hundred thousand, and if we include combatants and non-combatants that figure is in all probability fairly correct.

Moreover, in addition to his own men Alexander had good reason to expect a considerable number of Indian allies. While he was wintering at Bactria he had been joined by an Indian chief from Gandhara named Sasigupta, a former ally of Bessus, and from him he learned something of the political conditions then existing in the Punjab. All vestiges of Persian government had long since disappeared, and the country was held partly by independent tribes under their own headmen, and partly by rival rajahs who were both seeking to bring the free tribes under their control by force of arms and also fighting one against the other. The most important of these rulers in the north-west was the Rajah of Taxila, whose dominions lay between the Indus and the Jhelum rivers; and even in 328 the rajah's son Ambhi had determined to join with the European against his own countrymen. The father hesitated but the son's will prevailed: envoys were sent to Alexander at Bokhara and gave an undertaking that when he came down to the plains the men of Taxila would be prepared to fight on his side.





THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER

## INDIA

In the early summer of 327 the advance from Bactria began. Once again the Macedonian columns toiled over the huge barrier of the Hindu Kush, this time probably by way of the Kaoshan pass, and so reached Alexandria of the Caucasus, where Nicanor was left behind to complete the organization of the new city and a Persian appointed as satrap of the province. Then they went some way down the Kabul valley and were there met by Ambhi. The old rajah had just died, and the new ruler after making formal submission received his kingdom at the hands of Alexander with the title of Taxiles. The road to the Indus lay open, but on this occasion Alexander preferred prudent caution to impetuous haste. Although Taxiles was his ally, the mountain country north of the Kabul was held by wild tribes who were as rebellious to foreign control as are the Pathans to-day, and to leave them unchallenged meant serious danger to the flank of any army operating on the Indus plain. Accordingly the army broke up into two parts, and while the smaller section under Hephæstion and Perdikkas took the easy route towards the Indus, the main force with Alexander turned back northwards into the snows.

For the next nine months Alexander was fighting continuously in the savage country which is now painfully familiar to our soldiers. His army was divided into separate columns, but the hill tribes, whom the Greeks called *Aspasii*, were brave and resolute, and his gazette recorded each week a succession of fierce assaults. In one such affray both he and

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Leonnatus were wounded ; in another Ptolemy engaged in an Homeric combat with a chief and after killing him in single-handed fight stripped him of his armour ; after a third Alexander was so impressed with the quality of the cattle which his men had captured that he gave orders for the whole herd to be driven at once straight to Macedonia. So pushing steadily onward he passed into the Swat country, and after capturing Massaga, the strong fortress of the Assaceni, had there a romantic adventure which gave him at least a short respite from bloodshed.

One evening after a day's hard march the column under his own command entered a valley in the heart of the mountains so thickly overgrown with trees that his men failed to notice a fortified village hidden in its depths. Their bivouac fires roused the inhabitants, and the village headman, coming to Alexander, told him that he had reached Nysa, where Dionysus once had rested in his Indian travels and left behind him some of his train, from whom the present settlers were descended. To the mountain<sup>1</sup> above the village the god had given the name Meros, 'Thigh', in remembrance of his second birth, and on the surrounding hills he had planted the vines and the ivy which still flourished there. On the next day it was found that the headman's tale was at least partly true, for the hill-sides were indeed covered with such ivy and wild vines as the Macedonians had not seen for many weary months. A halt was called, the men made themselves festal garlands of vine ten-

<sup>1</sup> The mountain to-day is called Koh-i-mor.

## INDIA

drills and ivy sprays, and for a fortnight the valley resounded with songs while the village worshippers of the old divinity and the soldier followers of the new Dionysus joined together in Bacchic revelry.

The episode at Nysa was a brief interlude of peace, but it was followed very shortly by the hard fighting at Aornos, the Birdless Rock. The situation of this fort was for long a matter of extreme doubt, and it is only recently that Sir Aurel Stein was able to locate it at Pir-sar, 'one of a series of narrow spurs which the range stretching from Upal throws out towards the Indus. This one from its level top, to which the name Pir-sar, "the holy man's height," is properly applied, falls off both on the east and west in sheer cliffs and rocky slopes. The southern end of Pir-sar rises into a small hillock known as Kuz-sar, "the lower height," as opposed to the Bar-sar at the northern end. The whole plateau extends at an average elevation of about seven thousand feet for over a mile and a half, and the fertile soil is suitable both for cultivation and grazing land. From it to the north the ice-crowned peaks above Kandia can be seen, and southward the plain of the Peshawar valley is clearly visible.'<sup>1</sup>

There was a story that Heracles after crossing the Hindu Kush attempted in vain to capture Aornos, and once again Alexander was seized by the familiar yearning to emulate and perhaps surpass the heroic deeds of his ancestors. He began operations by sending Ptolemy forward with the Agrianians to make his way to the

<sup>1</sup> *Alexander's Campaign on the Indian North-west Frontier*. Sir Aurel Stein, *Geographical Journal*, Vol. 70, p. 515.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

top of the plateau and signal when he had reached his destination. Alexander himself the next day led his main army up by the same path which Ptolemy had used, and after some very fierce fighting reached the top and joined forces. The tribesmen, however, by that time had retreated to the fort on Bar-sar, which was separated from the rest of the plateau by a deep ravine. To climb the steep cliff was impossible ; the only course was to raise a mound in the ravine from which the catapults could fire upon the defenders of the fort. The work was begun at once, each soldier cutting a hundred stakes and piling earth upon them, so that by the end of the fourth day not only was the mound itself of adequate size, but the fire from it had enabled the Macedonians to seize a small hillock level with the fort. Thereupon the enemy sent a herald to arrange terms of surrender, meaning themselves to escape under cover of darkness ; but Alexander frustrated their plan by one last bold stroke. Taking seven hundred of his bodyguard he started to scale the sheer rock which the defenders were no longer watching. He himself was the first to reach the summit, and at the head of his men fell upon his terrified foes, who were either cut down in the fight or flung themselves over the precipice. And thus, says Arrian, Alexander became master of the rock which had baffled Heracles.

The capture of Aornos put an end for the time to the hillmen's resistance, and placing Sasigupta in charge of the fort Alexander went down to the Indus and amused himself for a time by hunting a herd of

## INDIA

war-elephants which had escaped from Massaga. While he was thus engaged his men were cutting trees and making boats, and when they were ready floated in them down the Indus to join Hephæstion and Perdikkas. The two sections of the army, which had been separated for more than six months, met at Ohind, sixteen miles above Attock, where a bridge across the Indus had been built and a fleet constructed. Their re-union was celebrated by a series of games, horse-races, and religious festivals, and then one morning in the spring of 326 the Army of India passed over the bridge into the promised land. Across the river Taxiles was waiting with his troops to welcome them, and after paying homage to Alexander as his overlord he conducted them as guests to his capital.

Taxila, whose ruins at Shahki-dheri have in recent years been excavated by Sir John Marshall, was a great city. Merchants coming from the north down the Kabul valley made it such a centre as Rawal Pindi is to-day; it was a royal residence, and it was also a seat of Brahman learning. Here for the first time the Greeks saw before them a picture of the peaceful life of India, as it exists now and as it had existed for centuries before their coming. They found the four-caste system—priests, nobles, farmers, and servile classes—which the fair invaders had invented to protect themselves against their dark subjects, firmly established, with the Brahmans enjoying all the privileges which they still possess. They saw the holy men, sitting naked in the burning sun or wrapped in silent contemplation, practising endurance and



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

indifferent to all worldly pleasures. Alexander wished to speak with these ascetics, but as they would not come to him and his dignity forbade him to go to them, he compromised by sending one of his officers, a man named Onesicritus, who had once been a follower of Diogenes. Onesicritus afterwards wrote a book on India, and of his interview we have a long account in Strabo.<sup>1</sup> He told the Indians that his master wished to be instructed in their wisdom, but was informed that an attempt to teach it through interpreters would be like trying to make water flow clear through mud, and that in any case the first essential was for the king to strip off his fine robes and sit patiently in the sun with them. For this Alexander was scarcely inclined, but he did induce one of them, of whom we shall hear later, to join him, and from his teaching learned something at least of the secrets of the East.

For the moment, however, the Macedonian was more occupied with practical considerations than with mystical philosophy. He was holding what we should call a *darbar* at Taxila, and obtaining all possible information about the lands which he proposed to bring under his sway. Taxiles had invited the *rajahs* of the surrounding country to come in, and there was a constant succession of conferences, banquets, and formal ceremonies. Presents, too, were made and given on a lavish scale, for Alexander had with him much of the Persian spoil, and to those rulers who offered him their help he also promised part at least

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, *Geography*, XV. 63-65.

## INDIA

of the dominions which would be forfeited by the recalcitrant.

But there was one Indian rajah who neither came to the durbar at Taxila nor had any intention of making terms with the foreign invader. The ruler of the Pauravas, whose kingdom lay just beyond the Jhelum,<sup>1</sup> he whom our Greek books call Porus, was a strong man, strong in body and strong in spirit ; and he was determined not to yield without a struggle. Long before Alexander's arrival he had formed a plan to bring all north-west India under his rule, and in alliance with one of the Kashmir rajahs he had already reduced to vassalage many of the free tribes beyond his frontiers to the east. Against Taxila he had not for the moment ventured on any open acts of hostility, but his ambitious schemes of conquest were known, and fear of his powerful neighbour was probably the chief reason which had driven Ambhi to espouse Alexander's cause. Huge of stature, proud, fearless, and a great fighter, Porus was an opponent worthy of the Macedonian king, and in his two hundred war-elephants he possessed an arm which even Alexander could not afford to despise. When he was bidden to come to Taxila he replied that he would meet the foreigner not in conference but in battle on his frontier ; and while there was time he sent for help from his ally in Kashmir, collected an army from the populous villages of his own country, and then waited for the enemy on the south bank of the Hydaspes.

<sup>1</sup> The modern Jhelum was in ancient Indian called the Vitasta, which the Greeks transliterated as Hydaspes.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

This was in the early summer of 326: the Punjab lay sweltering in the intense heat and the rains had not yet come when Alexander left Taxila and marched southwards. He probably did not come to the town of Jhelum by what is now the Grand Trunk Road, but took the route which Babur followed in A.D. 1519, across the Salt Range, through the pass of Nandana, and so to the river close by the township of Haranpur. The first detachment of the Macedonians to arrive was an advanced guard protecting the Phœnician sailors, who brought with them in sections the boats which had been built on the Indus. The rest quickly followed; and soon the two armies faced one another on opposite sides of the river. Porus had with him about thirty-five thousand men together with his elephants, Alexander roughly the same number of his own troops and five thousand allies from Taxila.

Neither side was particularly anxious to move; for Porus was in a very strong position, and although Alexander had the initiative of action he saw that in face of the elephants it was almost impossible to get his horses across the river. The best plan seemed to lie in a succession of feint attacks, which might weary the Pauravas and cause them in time to relax their vigilance. So day and night Porus was kept on the alert: he heard the trumpets sounding across the river and the words of command being given; he saw the cavalry filing down to the bank and the boats putting out into the stream filled with soldiers; but when he had drawn up his elephants to oppose a landing, the Macedonians would always return to

## INDIA

their camp and leave him disappointed. This performance went on for some weeks, and meanwhile Alexander reconnoitred the country until he found a place some seventeen miles away where an island at a bend of the river hid a crossing party from sight. A flotilla of boats was sent up secretly, and one day Craterus was left with part of the army to keep Porus occupied, while Alexander with fifteen thousand of his best troops marched upstream.

That night was dark and stormy with heavy rain and wind, so that the boats were almost invisible as they crossed the river. Alexander, Perdiccas, Ptolemy, Seleucus and Lysimachus, a heavy weight of destiny for one small galley, made the passage first, and then watched their men disembark. But when they came to march down stream they found to their dismay that they were on an island and were still cut off by a channel from the further bank. By this time it was daylight, their presence had been discovered and scouts were galloping back to warn Porus, so that it was a race for time and not a moment was to be lost. Fortunately the river was at its summer level, and although the water in the channel was nearly up to their necks men and horses were just able to wade across and be ready for battle before the enemy appeared. Porus had sent forward some cavalry and chariots to reconnoitre, but the chariots stuck in the mud and the cavalry were driven back by Alexander's horse archers. On their return with news that the Macedonians had crossed the river in force, Porus prepared for battle, and the two armies advancing towards one

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

another met near the place where Nurpur now stands.<sup>1</sup>

Porus drew up his line which stretched for four miles across the plain. The elephants were a hundred feet apart, like bastions in a wall ; between and behind them were his infantry and archers ; on either wing more infantry and the light horse. Alexander had all his cavalry on his right wing, the phalanx in the centre, and the hypaspists and light-armed troops on the left. Porus, seeing this formation, brought all his own cavalry over to his left wing, and Alexander then sent Cœnus with half the Companions across the line, wishing to tempt the Paurava cavalry to attack his weakened force. The plan succeeded, the Indian horsemen advanced against him, and Cœnus quickly wheeling round fell upon their rear. Very soon they were driven back in disorder upon the elephants, and the phalanx, who had been ordered to wait for this moment, advanced in the centre. This was the crisis of the battle, and for some time the Macedonians had to fight hard. But at last the wounded elephants began to break from the line, and the archers, who should have supported them, found it almost impossible to keep their long bows steady on the slippery ground. Alexander's cavalry charged down on the flank, the phalanx forced through the centre, and when the fresh troops with Craterus, who had crossed the river, came into action, the issue was decided.

As long as the battle lasted, Porus, sitting on the

<sup>1</sup> *Alexander's Passage of the Hydaspes.* Sir Aurel Stein, *Geographical Journal*, Vol. 80, p. 31.

## INDIA

back of his huge elephant, directed the fight and encouraged his men. His right shoulder was pierced by a dart, but it was not until all was over that he allowed his mahout to wheel round and slowly left the field. Before he had gone far a horseman came galloping after him and called on him to halt. He turned round, but when he saw that the messenger was the renegade Taxiles he collected all his remaining strength and hurling a javelin at him compelled him to retire. He was now, however, growing faint from loss of blood, and when a fresh body of pursuers overtook him he surrendered and was brought before Alexander. The conqueror looked with admiration at his gallant adversary, and through an interpreter asked how he should treat him. 'As a king,' Porus replied, and when the other asked for more precise details he added, 'The words "As a king" include everything.' The answer appealed to Alexander's chivalrous spirit, and soon afterwards he gave him back his dominions, reconciled him to Taxiles, and established them both as protected princes under his suzerainty.

The battle of the Hydaspes was one of Alexander's most brilliant exploits ; but his losses in it were far more severe than in any other battle, and neither officers nor men recovered completely from its effects. After the victory two new towns were founded, Nicæa and Bucephala, the latter named after the war-horse which had just died ; and then the march towards Ocean was resumed. The rains were now beginning in earnest, the tribes were warlike and hostile, the

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

country was difficult, and river after river<sup>1</sup> had to be crossed. First came the Chenab, next the Ravi, and then the army was in the country of the Cathæans, who gathered together to defend their fortified town of Sargala. A triple line of waggons round the town had first to be taken by assault before the siege engines could be brought up against the walls. The tribesmen offered a desperate resistance, and although seventeen thousand of them were killed and seventy thousand taken prisoner, it is acknowledged that twelve hundred of Alexander's men were seriously wounded.

Once again the army toiled on eastwards, and soon reports began to come in that when they crossed the next river they would find themselves faced by a desert which would take twelve days to cross. Beyond it ran a mighty river, the Ganges, which flowed eastwards through the kingdom of a monarch possessed of myriads of soldiers and thousands of war-elephants. It must not be supposed that these tales either frightened Alexander or affected his determination to reach Ocean, but they probably had a serious effect on his men. At any rate when they came to the next river, the Beas, which the Greeks called Hyphasis, his plans were brought to a sudden end, for the Macedonians with one accord refused to go any further.

<sup>1</sup> The tributaries of the Indus have these Greek and Indian names: Acesines=Chenab, Hydraotes=Ravi, Hydaspes=Jhelum, Hesidrus=Sutlej.

## CHAPTER XIII

### RETURN TO THE WEST

THERE is a limit to human endurance, and for the Macedonian army that limit was reached on the banks of the Hyphasis. In eight years they had marched nearly twelve thousand miles and fought innumerable battles. They had endured heat and cold, traversed barren deserts and scaled precipitous mountains, advancing ever onwards to the end of the known world. Now for seventy days they had faced the intermittent rain storms of the monsoon season, and officers and men alike had but one thought, to return home. Alexander called a council of his staff and explained that before them lay a land which Heracles himself had never traversed, and that to cross it would win for them immortal fame. But even this had no effect, and the gallant Cœnus, a man *sans peur et sans reproche*, told him bluntly that any further advance eastwards was impossible. An appeal to the army was equally unsuccessful, for the men maintained a gloomy silence, and Alexander retired to his tent, where he remained for three days. On the fourth morning at his instructions Aristander took the omens for crossing the river, and when he reported that they were unfavourable Alexander at last gave way.

But before he went back from the Hyphasis he



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

determined to leave behind him a memorial of his presence. Twelve great altars, each as high as a tower, were erected upon the river bank, and in the centre of them a column of bronze. Upon the altars dedications were engraved, 'To my father Ammon, to my brother Heracles, to Athena the wise, to Olympian Zeus, to the Cabiri of Samothrace, to the Indian Helios, and to my brother Apollo'; and upon the column this inscription, 'Here Alexander halted.' In his camp at this time there was a certain exiled chief, the Maurya Chandragupta, who a few years later established the first great Indian empire; and tradition tells us that he and his descendants, including the famous Açoka, were wont every year to make a pilgrimage to these altars from their capital at Pataliputra, and on them offer sacrifice in the Greek fashion.

It is unreasonable to call Alexander's return journey from India a retreat or to compare it with Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. He had intended to march on to Ocean, which he thought was not far away, and by it to return again northwards round the world. We know now that to find Ocean would have meant a much longer journey than he imagined, and even then his projected voyage would have been impossible. When he was checked on the Hyphasis he substituted another route by way of the Indus, the Indian Ocean, and the Persian Gulf, which not only proved practicable but also opened up easy communication by sea between the mouth of the Euphrates and the mouth of the Indus, so that henceforth the long and tedious land journey from Babylonia to India could be avoided.

## RETURN TO THE WEST

This is not to say that the return for his own men was either short or easy. The nine hundred miles down the Indus took nine months and involved very hard fighting ; and then came the march through the Gedrosian desert, one of the most terrific journeys that an army has ever attempted.

In July 326 the Macedonians did not know what lay before them, and it was with joy that they turned their faces westward. They crossed the Ravi river again, and then the Chenab, where some of the Greek soldiers were left behind in a new colony, and so came back to the Jhelum. Here they halted for some weeks while a fleet, manned by Phœnician and Egyptian sailors, was being prepared under the command of Nearchus to take the horses and a small part of the army down by water. In November all was ready, and one sunny morning the great armament took its departure. Alexander, standing on the prow of his galley, poured libations to the Indian river gods, to Heracles, and to Ammon : the trumpets sounded : the boats got under way : and on either bank the soldiers marched in column, accompanied by crowds of Indians with drums and tambourines singing and dancing as they went along.

After ten days march they reached the confluence of the Jhelum and the Chenab, where two galleys sunk at the rapids ; and then news came in that the strong tribe of the Malavas, whom our Greek authors call Malloi, were gathering for an attack. The Macedonians had not expected any more fighting in India and were by no means eager for a new campaign,

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

but Alexander's spirits in the face of danger at once revived. He decided at once that the best way to defend himself was to take the offensive, and accordingly divided the army into three sections, one under his own command, one under Hephæstion, and one under Philip, whom he had appointed satrap of the northern province. Marching swiftly across sandy deserts and through swampy jungles the attacking columns took the Malavas by surprise, and one after the other captured all their fortified towns. The procedure everywhere was the same. The place was invested, the walls after fierce fighting were taken by assault, and the defenders driven back into the town and there massacred.

It is possible that Alexander was the only man who really enjoyed the hazardous business, and on one occasion his reckless audacity nearly cost him his life. His men were besieging a town, which has sometimes been wrongly identified with the modern Multan, and had got so far as to bring their scaling ladders up to the wall. Then apparently they hesitated, and Alexander dashing forward seized a ladder, and leaped down the other side of the wall into the midst of the enemy. He was followed only by two of his generals, Peucestas and Leonnatus, and by one soldier ; and as the ladder broke behind them they were left for some time unsupported. The soldier was killed at once, and the Malavas, recognizing the king by his shining armour, shot him through the breast, so that he fell down in a swoon. Peucestas covered his body with the sacred shield taken from the temple at Ilium,

## RETURN TO THE WEST

and Leonnatus beat back the assailants, until the storming party at last scaled the wall. Then, infuriated by the sight of their wounded leader, whom they believed to be dead, the soldiers burst into the town and spared no one, man, woman, or child.

Alexander's body was carried out on the shield and taken down stream on the royal galley to the camp at the rivers' confluence. The rumour spread that his wound was mortal, and consternation reigned among the men at the thought of what their position would be in an unknown land without their beloved King. But Alexander was not dead ; and after the arrow was extracted he slowly recovered, and was able on his arrival at the camp to wave a sign of greeting to the expectant throng. The next day he had sufficient strength to mount a horse and show himself to the army, who welcomed him, as Arrian tells us, with shouts of joy and gathering round pressed close to touch his hands and knees, and showered flowers upon his path. All their past grievances were forgotten in their gladness at his recovery ; and when soon afterwards the Malavas came in and made full submission it was felt that the risk which he had taken had not been made in vain.

As soon as the period of convalescence was over the journey down the Chenab was resumed. The stream grew wider and wider as it was joined first by the Ravi and then by the Sutlej, and finally carrying the waters of four great rivers it fell into the Indus. Here the army halted again, and a new city, another Alexandria, was founded, to be the southern limit of

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Philip's satrapy. About half the voyage to the sea was now completed, and in February 325 the army and an enlarged fleet began the second stage down the Indus. They found themselves again in a country governed by warring rajahs, the chief of whom was called by the Greeks Musicanus, and as had happened before, native rivalry smoothed the way for the foreigner. A minor ruler, one Sambus, came over to Alexander, and although Musicanus had at first been recalcitrant, he then thought it prudent to submit, and welcomed the Macedonians to his capital. The rajah, however, had not reckoned with the Brahmans, who in the Indus country had far more political power than in the north, and on religious grounds were fiercely opposed to any foreign interference. The Brahmans proclaimed a holy war, and called on Musicanus to join them, if he wished to keep his throne ; and so the unfortunate ruler, taken between two fires, renounced the oath of allegiance which he had just taken, and joined the insurgents. Alexander by that time had moved down the river, leaving Peithon as satrap of the Indus province ; and Peithon took prompt measures to crush the revolt. Musicanus was captured and hanged on a gibbet in his own city : the Brahmans were massacred wholesale and their corpses crucified along the roads.

The effect of this severity was to strike terror into the whole country-side, and when Alexander in July reached Pattala, where the delta of the Indus began, he found the city deserted. His first step was to induce the frightened natives to return, and when he

## RETURN TO THE WEST

had succeeded in this he left Hephæstion to build a new citadel, while he himself set off to explore the western arm of the river. This proved no easy task, but with the help of guides he reached the Indian Ocean near the existing shrine of Pir Patho, and had his first experience of tidal waters. A bore which ran up the river and swamped several of his galleys caused his men much alarm, but he quieted their fears, and leaving most of his boats behind in shelter, sailed to an island at the river mouth. There he offered the sacrifices which had been prescribed to him by the priest at the oracle of Ammon, and then ventured out into the open sea to ascertain if there was any land lying to the west. To his joy he saw that the ocean stretched out unbroken, and before he turned his galley he threw into the waves the golden bowl from which he had poured drink-offering to Poseidon, and prayed the god to grant his fleet a safe voyage back to the Euphrates.

After thus exploring the western arm of the Indus Alexander went down the eastern and found a large lake, perhaps our Rann of Cutch, where he constructed wharves and docks for the sea-borne trade which he contemplated would soon spring up between the eastern and the western parts of his empire. He then went back to Pattala and made the final arrangements for return. Craterus some time before had been sent off with a third part of the infantry and all the elephants, with instructions to make his way to Kandahar through the Mulla pass, and thence down the Helmand valley to Seistan and Carmania, where

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

he was to wait for Alexander's arrival. This was a comparatively easy road, and Alexander also might have followed it had it not been for his ardent desire to discover the possibility of a sea route between India and Babylonia. His plans involved a hazardous sea voyage for the fleet, and for the army a land journey which was not so much hazardous as fraught with certain danger. But where Cyrus and Semiramis had gone Alexander must go; and if it had been possible he would himself have faced the perils of sea and land simultaneously. As it was, he very reluctantly allowed Nearchus to take command of the fleet with Archias and Onesicritus as his chief officers, while he with the army was to march along the coast, and for them establish depôts of provisions and supplies.

In September 325 therefore the army left Pattala on its westward march, while Nearchus with the fleet remained behind until the monsoon should change. He had with him about one hundred and fifty ships, whose crews amounted to some five thousand men; but he had no supplies, and although he could carry food sufficient for ten days he had to land almost every day for water. Soon after the army's departure he dropped down to the eastern mouth of the Indus, intending to wait there for the October monsoon; but the tribesmen were so hostile that he put out to sea at once, and made his way to Alexander's Haven near Karachi, where contrary winds kept him stationary for nearly a month. Meanwhile Alexander, marching along the coast, crossed the river Arabis, the modern Purali, and entered the country of the Oreitæ. They







TALOI MOUNTAINS

## RETURN TO THE WEST

made their submission, another Alexandria was founded, and Apollophanes appointed satrap of a new province. Leonnatus was left with the Agrianians to overawe the tribesmen and to collect supplies for the fleet, which were to be sent down to the coast at Cocala ; and then the main army moved on. But as soon as Alexander had disappeared the tribes rose in arms and killed Apollophanes ; and Leonnatus for a time had all he could do to suppress the revolt.

This was the first unfortunate incident : the second occurred soon afterwards. From the country of the Oreitæ, as Arrian tells us, Alexander passed into the land of the Ichthyophagi, ' who, as their name implies, live on fish. They inhabit deserts where not a tree grows, and where there are not even wild fruits. They construct their dwellings with the backbones of fish. They have shaggy hair all over their bodies, and go practically naked.' In such a waste it was difficult to feed the army, much more to collect provisions for the fleet, and the soldiers were half-starving when they reached the river Tomeros, now the Hingol, and found their way barred by the Taloi mountains. Of this range Alexander had received no information, and he was compelled to strike inland, where for the next two hundred miles he was in the most desolate part of Macran, the southern district of the country which the Greeks called Gedrosia and is now Baluchistan.

There is a Baluchi saying which runs thus : ' When the Almighty was creating the world there was some refuse left over, and with this Baluchistan was made.'

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

The few English travellers who know the country agree that the proverb is not far from the truth, and Sir Thomas Holdich gives the following description of its scenery.<sup>1</sup> ‘A dead monotony of laminated clay backbones, serrated like that of a whale’s vertebrae, sticking out from the smoother outlines of mud ridges, which slope down on either hand to where a little edging of sticky salt betokens that there is a drainage line when there is water to trickle along it; and a little faded decoration of neutral-tinted tamarisk, shadowing the yellow stalks of last year’s forgotten grass, along its banks—such was the sylvan aspect of a scene which we had before us only too often.’ At the time of year when Alexander was there the temperature in the shade—whenever there is any shade—is about 100 degrees, and such rare water as can be found is scarcely fit to drink. Both Arrian and Strabo enlarge on the army’s sufferings, and the latter’s account is so vivid that it deserves quotation.

‘In addition to the resourcelessness of the country,’ says the geographer, ‘the heat of the sun was grievous, as also the depth and the heat of the sand; and in some places there were sand-hills so high that, in addition to the difficulty of lifting one’s legs as out of a pit, there were also ascents and descents to be made. And it was necessary also, on account of the wells, to make long marches of two hundred or three hundred furlongs, and sometimes even six hundred, travelling mostly by night. But they would encamp at a distance from the wells, often at a distance of thirty furlongs, in order that the soldiers might not, to satisfy their thirst,

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<sup>1</sup> *The Indian Borderland*, p. 319.

## RETURN TO THE WEST

drink too much water ; for many would plunge into the wells, armour and all, and drink as submerged men would ; and then, after expiring, 'would swell up and float on the surface and corrupt the wells, which were shallow ; and others, exhausted by reason of thirst, would lie down in the middle of the road in the open sun, and then trembling, along with a jerking of hands and legs, they would die like persons seized with chills or ague. And in some cases soldiers would turn aside from the main road, and fall asleep, being overcome by sleep and fatigue. And some, falling behind the army, perished by wandering from the roads and by reason of heat and lack of everything, though others arrived safely, but only after suffering many hardships ; and a torrential stream, coming on by night, overwhelmed both a large number of persons and many articles ; and much of the royal equipment was also swept away.' <sup>1</sup>

Through this sandy inferno even the veteran Macedonians found it hard to struggle, and nearly all the women and children who were with them died. The baggage animals were slaughtered for food, the carts were broken up for firewood, and on the blaze were thrown the precious spices which the Phœnician traders with the army had carefully gathered on the coast. Poisonous herbs and poisonous snakes were the only products of the sandhills. There was a kind of laurel which caused any one who tasted it to die of epilepsy, and also a prickly plant, the fruit of which strewn the ground, like cucumbers, and was full of juice ; and if drops of this juice struck the eye, blindness ensued. As for the snakes, they were lurking everywhere ; and any one whom they struck died

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, *Geography*, XV, 2, 6 (tr. H. L. Jones).

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

immediately. Alexander did his best to encourage his men, marching on foot with them and refusing water when it was offered ; and when at last the guides acknowledged that they had lost their way, he rode off himself to find a road back to the coast. Fortunately he had not gone far before he saw the sea shining before him, and when the soldiers came down to the beach and scraped away the shingle they found there springs of good water. The worst of their hardships were now over, for although they had to march for seven days along the barren coast from Pasni to Gwadur, they then took the easy road inland, which brought them to Poura, the chief town of the satrapy of Gedrosia.

At Poura there were provisions in plenty, and after cashiering the satrap for his negligence in not sending help Alexander allowed the army a period of rest to compensate for two months of continuous labour. He then went along the Bampur valley to Salmous, the 'Khan of Salmi,' which Marco Polo afterwards visited, and so to Gulaskird, where he founded another Alexandria. Here he was joined by Craterus, who had brought his men from Kandahar without incident, and the two divisions were thus happily reunited. On the other hand, no news of Nearchus and the fleet had as yet been received, and Alexander was painfully conscious that he had not carried out his plan of providing the stores of provisions along the coast which he had promised. His own experience had shown him how desolate and barren that coast was, and he began to reproach himself bitterly with having

## RETURN TO THE WEST

exposed his dear Nearchus to the fate which he feared had now befallen him.

Then one morning at Gulashkird, as he was sitting in his tent a prey to gloomy thoughts, a page reported that the governor of the coast district had arrived with important tidings. The governor was brought in and said that Nearchus had landed in the Persian Gulf five days previously and was now on his way up country, and that he himself had ridden forward in haste to give the glad news. At this Alexander's sorrow turned to joy and he waited impatiently for Nearchus to appear. But one day passed and then another, and nothing happened, so that at last Alexander in a fury threw the governor into prison and sent messengers to see if there was any truth whatever in his words. The messengers set off towards the Persian Gulf, and on their way met a little group of seven travellers, men in ragged clothes, thin, unkempt, and unshaven. They were about to pass them, when one of the seven came and asked where they were going. 'In search of Nearchus and his fleet,' they said; and the other replied, 'I am Nearchus, and this,' pointing to one of his companions, 'is Archias: take us to Alexander, if it was he who sent you.' Thereupon some of the messengers returned at full speed and told the king that Nearchus was on his way; but when they were asked about the fleet's safety they had to confess that they knew nothing. Soon afterwards Nearchus himself arrived, and Alexander seeing his miserable appearance concluded that he and his companions were the only survivors and

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

that the fleet was lost. Taking his friend by the hand he wept for a time in silence, and at last said, 'Thank God that you and Archias are safe: but tell me, now, how the ships and their crews perished.' Nearchus assured him that ships and men were safe, and then Alexander, with a fresh burst of tears, swore by Zeus and Ammon that he rejoiced over their safety more than over all the conquest of Asia.

We may suppose that Nearchus soon after this gave the king the account of his voyage which he afterwards wrote down in his *Periplus*, whose substance has been preserved for us in Arrian's *Indica*. In brief summary his tale was as follows: After leaving Alexander's Haven his first long halt was at Cocala, where he met Leonnatus, who had just killed six thousand of the Oreitæ in battle. From him he received supplies for ten days, and exchanged the more chicken-hearted of his sailors for men of stouter courage. At the Tomeros he had his first fight with the natives, shaggy savages with nails like claws, which they used instead of knives to cut up the fish on which they lived. Their only weapons were fire-hardened stakes, and when Nearchus' men, covered by a shower of arrows from the ships, swam swiftly to the shore, they fled in terror and were either cut down as they ran or else taken prisoners.

By this time the fleet was off the coast of the Ichthyophagi, and the men suffered severely from thirst and hunger. Water was scarce and bad, and the flesh of such few sheep as were brought to them tasted more like fish than mutton. Nearchus, more-

## RETURN TO THE WEST

over, was very uncertain as to his route until a Gedrosian fisherman named Hydraces offered his services as pilot ; but after that his worst difficulties were over. On one occasion, it is true, the sailors saw spouts of water rising from the sea, and dropped their oars in fright. But when the pilot told Nearchus that it was only a school of whales, he gave orders to charge down on them with trumpets sounding, as though on a hostile fleet ; and the unwieldy creatures plunged beneath the water to appear again spouting in the distance. Another episode was that of the enchanted island of Nosala, on which, as the pilot said, if any one set foot he was never seen again. The crew of an Egyptian ship, according to Hydraces, had recently landed there, and the vessel was found drifting empty over the sea. To test the truth of this Nearchus rowed round the island, calling out to any one who might be on it, but received no answer. Then in spite of his crew's entreaties he himself landed, and, it is needless to say, returned unharmed.

It speaks for the leader's skill that there seems to have been no discontent among the crews during all the voyage, and only one disagreement among the officers. The latter occurred when the fleet reached the entrance of the Persian Gulf and Onesicritus insisted that their proper course lay to the left along the Arabian coast. To this Nearchus fortunately refused to agree, and after sailing northwards for some days reached the harbour of Harmozia, near the modern Ormuz. Some of his men went ashore, and to their joyful surprise met a man dressed in a



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Macedonian riding-cloak, who turned out to be a straggler from the army. He told them that the king was only five days' journey away, and took them to the governor of the district, who promised to conduct them to Alexander. Nearchus thought it wise first to draw up his ships and construct a fortification round them ; and while he was doing this the governor hurried off to be the first with the glad tidings. The rest we know.

The safe return of Nearchus and the successful issue of the whole expedition was obviously an occasion for joyful celebration, and the army in Carmania organized in honour of its new Dionysus such a Bacchanalia as had greeted the god in days gone by on his return from India. Plutarch gives us a picture of the scene :<sup>1</sup>

‘ He himself was conveyed slowly along by eight horses, while he feasted day and night continuously with his companions on a dais built upon a lofty and conspicuous scaffolding of oblong shape : and waggons without number followed, some with purple and embroidered canopies, others protected from the sun by boughs of trees which were kept fresh and green, conveying the rest of his friends and commanders, who were all garlanded and drinking. Not a shield was to be seen, not a helmet, not a spear, but along the whole march with cups and drinking-horns and flagons the soldiers kept dipping wine from huge casks and mixing-bowls and pledging one another, some as they marched along, others lying down ; while pipes and flutes, stringed instruments and song, and revelling cries of women, filled every place with abundant music. Then, upon this disordered and straggling procession there followed also the sports of

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<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Alexander*, 67 (tr. B. Perrin).

## RETURN TO THE WEST

bacchanalian license, as though Bacchus himself were present and conducting the revel.'

It is possible that Plutarch's description owes some of its colour to Cleitarchus' ready pen, but for it there is doubtless a basis of truth. The festivities lasted, we are told, for a week; and then Nearchus at his own earnest request was sent back to Harmozia to bring the fleet up the Persian Gulf, while the army set off by way of Persepolis to Susa, which after six years' absence they reached in February 324.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE LAST YEAR

THE great march, with all its difficulties and dangers was over : but at Susa Alexander found work in plenty of a different kind awaiting him. While he had been fighting in India and toiling through the desert, many of the men appointed by him to positions of power had been abusing his trust for their own advantage. Harpalus, for example, the imperial treasurer, a financial expert and as unscrupulous as any financier of our own day, had been left at Ecbatana in 330. But while Alexander was engaged in the Iranian campaigns he had removed himself and the treasure to the more congenial climate of Babylon, and there began a life of reckless enjoyment. He squandered immense sums on the Athenian courtesan Pythionice, and at her death built for her magnificent tombs both at Babylon and at Athens. He then took another Athenian woman, Glycera, to the royal palace at Tarsus, making the people prostrate themselves before his mistress as though she were a queen ; and generally indulged in every form of the wildest extravagance. The return of Alexander from the East meant, of course, the end of all this ; and as he knew that pardon was impossible he used what remained in the treasury to hire ships and an army of mercenaries,

## THE LAST YEAR

and sailed off to Athens, where he hoped to raise a revolt against Alexander with the help of Alexander's money.

Thus for the moment Harpalus escaped the punishment which was dealt out impartially to the other offenders, Macedonian and Persian alike. Ruthless severity was necessary if the people were to be protected against the tyranny of subordinates; and Alexander, who in the past had ordered that two soldiers convicted of rape should be treated as wild beasts and executed out of hand, was determined to inspire all his officials with a wholesome fear of retribution for wrong-doing. The Persian satraps of Persis, Susiana, Carmania, and Media, who had plundered the tomb of Cyrus and the royal stud at Nisæa, were accordingly put to death, as were the two men who had taken Parmenio's place at Ecbatana, the Macedonian Cleander and the Thracian Sitalces, together with six hundred of their soldiers. The satrapies of Persis and Susiana were then united and given to Peucestas, who adopted Persian dress and learnt the Persian language; while in Bactria, where the Greek mercenaries in the new colonies were in almost open revolt, Amyntas was superseded by Philippus. Various Persian pretenders were also summarily dealt with, and the levying of mercenaries by any provincial governor was forbidden. Finally, as a sign of the tightening of control the Persian office of Chiliarch, grand vizier, was revived and given to Hephæstion.

The guilty had now received the punishment which

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

was their due, and Alexander was able to resume his part as reconciler of the nations. He resolved to celebrate the union of the East and West by a marriage feast such as the world had never seen, and invitations were sent to every part of the empire to come to Susa and take part in the rejoicings. A pavilion half a mile in circumference was raised on fifty marble columns, its roof composed of rich tapestry embroidered in gold with hangings of golden tissue stretched from pillar to pillar. In the middle of the pavilion the royal table was placed with a hundred silver couches for the chief bridal pairs, and one of gold in the centre for Alexander and his queen. Tables were ranged around for the other guests, the envoys from Greece and the officers of the army: the soldiers had their places outside.

The banquet itself was conducted with military precision. A company of trumpeters behind the royal couch announced to all that the king was pouring the first libation to the gods; another fanfare declared that the feast was about to begin; a third heralded the arrival of the brides. The curtains were drawn aside, and the company of virgins veiled in Persian fashion, came forward and took their places by the side of their future husbands. Stateira, the elder daughter of Darius, was chosen by Alexander himself as his second consort, a childless consort as it turned out, although Roxana later bore him another son. Her younger sister, Drypetis, was allotted to Hephæstion; Amastris, daughter of Oxathres and niece of Darius, passed to Craterus. Perdicas took the

## THE LAST YEAR

daughter of the Median Prince Atropates ; Ptolemy one of the daughters of Artabazus, and Eumenes the other ; Nearchus received the daughter of the Rhodian Mentor. Lastly, and this proved the most enduring of all the unions, Seleucus was given Apama, daughter of the gallant Spitamenes of Sogdiana, who became by him the ancestress of the long line of Seleucid kings.

These are some of the chief names recorded in our ancient authorities : but they formed only a very small part of the bridal throng. On that February day eighty of the Companions and ten thousand of the rank and file took Asiatic women as their wives, and for the next week Susa was the scene of a world honeymoon. Festivity was the order of the day ; flute players and harpists, jugglers and acrobats, dancers and reciters, all reaped a rich harvest ; and as it was the season of the Dionysia a satyric play was performed in which the recreant Harpalus was held up to ridicule. Alexander for his part distributed wedding presents with a lavish hand, and not only freed the newly married soldiers from all army dues, but announced that he would pay any debts which they had contracted if they would declare the amount. Nay more, when this condition seemed to some suspicious, tables were set up in the camp covered with money and any soldier was allowed to take all that he needed without further enquiry.

The marriage feast was the chief event of this spring ; but there also occurred about this time at Susa a strange event which deserves record. One of the Indian fakirs, or, as the Greeks called them, 'gymno-

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

sophists,' seekers after wisdom, a man to whom they had given the name of Calanus, had travelled with Alexander from his native land, and was frequently consulted both by the king himself and by Ptolemy and Lysimachus. He was very old, and when at Susa for the first time in his life he fell ill he announced his intention to end his sufferings at once by a voluntary death. Alexander tried to dissuade him, and when he found it impossible gave orders that a funeral pyre should be erected, and the whole army assembled to honour his last moments with their presence. The pyre was built, the soldiers paraded before it and Calanus was carried out in a litter. Mounting the pyre he sprinkled himself with holy water, cut off a lock of his hair as an offering to his gods, and turning his face to the sun knelt down in prayer. The trumpets sounded, the soldiers shouted farewell, and the elephants raised a shrill cry. But just before the torch was set to the faggots Calanus turned to Alexander and said, 'We shall meet again at Babylon.'

That meeting was soon to come, but for the moment Alexander was too busy to give much thought to the future. Before his departure from Susa he turned his attention to Greek affairs, and issued two rescripts to the cities which belonged to the League of Corinth. There was at this time an immense number of exiles in Greece, homeless men ready to serve any master as mercenary soldiers, and a perpetual source of unrest. Many of them had been driven from their cities by the tyrants, whom Antipater encouraged, and Alexander decided now to try and bring back peace and

## THE LAST YEAR

unity by ordering their recall, although in most cases they were his political opponents. To see that his command was carried out in the spirit which he intended he sent a special envoy with his letter to the Olympic games, where twenty thousand exiles received it with shouts of joy. He also superseded Antipater by Craterus, giving the latter instructions 'to supervise the freedom of the Hellenes.'

This rescript was technically an infringement of the League covenant by which Alexander had undertaken not to interfere in the domestic affairs of the constituent cities; and he accordingly sent a second letter requesting the Greeks to recognize his divinity. In one aspect this was purely a political move, placing him above human law in accordance with the dictum of Aristotle, who in the *Politics* said that if one man should be incomparably superior to all others, he is as a god and against his will no laws hold good. But there was also behind it the consciousness of a divine origin which never left Alexander; and in this matter as in many others during his life he was influenced almost equally by practical politics and by mystical belief. In any case the Greeks accepted the second letter far more readily than they did the first. The Athenians were extremely unwilling to return to the Samian exiles the lands which they had taken from them; but on the motion of Demosthenes they at once enrolled Alexander on the list of their state divinities. Let him call himself the son of Zeus or the son of Poseidon, said the orator, if only he leaves Samos in our hands. The other cities followed the



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

example of Athens, and when the Greek envoys came to Babylon in 323, they wore the sacred garland which showed that they were worshippers approaching a god.

The marriage feast was an attempt to put the social relations of Macedonians and Persians upon a sound basis ; the next thing was to apply the same idea of equal union to army organization. Immediately after the death of Darius Alexander had started enrolling Asiatics for the Iranian campaign, mounted archers, mounted javelin men, and light-armed skirmishers of various kinds and nations. But these had all been second-line troops, and the core of the army was still composed of Macedonians. From India, however, only twenty-five thousand of his veterans returned with him to Susa. Some had been killed, some were disabled by wounds, some had settled as colonists in the new cities of the east. The phalanx was more than a third under its proper strength and the heavy cavalry was at least a thousand short of its complement. On the other hand, the thirty thousand young Persians who had been selected for army service in 330 were now trained soldiers and in the prime of manhood. They had been taught Greek, instructed by Macedonian drill sergeants, and were ready to take the place which Alexander from the first had designed for them. Those who had been trained for the cavalry joined the ranks of the Companions, forming a fifth hipparchy under the command of the Bactrian Hystaspes ; the others were enrolled in the phalanx.

## THE LAST YEAR

The Macedonians had readily accepted their foreign wives, and also the wedding dowries which they brought to them ; but they were by no means as willing to share their tents with Persian men as they were to share their beds with Persian women. As long as the Asiatics were confined to the less reputable branches of the service, they grudgingly tolerated their presence ; but that barbarians should be admitted to the phalanx, to the heavy cavalry, and even to the royal guards, seemed as intolerable to them as it had seemed to Parmenio. For the moment they said nothing, but they were only waiting for an opportunity, and the opportunity soon came. Early in the summer of 324 Alexander arranged for Hephæstion to set out with the main army towards Ecbatana while he himself sailed with Nearchus down to the Persian Gulf, and explored the district round the mouths of the Tigris and Euphrates. On his return up the river, he examined and rectified the barrage works which the Persian kings had constructed on both rivers, and finally rejoined the army which was waiting for him in camp at Opis, a place on the Tigris about one hundred and fifty miles north of Babylon.

At Opis the great eastern road from Ecbatana comes down on its long trail to the Aegean ; and it seemed to Alexander, who was already thinking of an Arabian expedition, that this was the best occasion to discharge those of his old soldiers who were unfit for another long campaign. He therefore summoned an assembly and announced his intention, promising a handsome gratuity in money to those whom he decided

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

to send back to their homes. But if he expected gratitude he did not get it. At the word 'discharge' the fires of discontent which had for weeks been smouldering burst into a blaze, and the whole army in open mutiny shouted that if any went home all would go. Alexander might fight the rest of his battles with his new Persian levies, and when they failed he could call down his heavenly father to help him.

The king had been waiting for the uproar to subside, but at this last insult he leaped down in fury from his tribunal, and ordered the guards to seize thirteen of the ring-leaders in the disturbance, and take them off at once for execution. He then mounted the platform again and addressed the silent multitude. He told them how his father Philip had found them rough country folk dressed in sheep-skins and living on the hill-sides, and had made them masters of Greece. He himself had led them to conquest of Asia, and after sharing every danger with them had given them their full part in the spoils of victory. Let them then go back to Macedonia and tell the people that they had left their king under Persian protection: he could do without them. So with a curt 'Dismiss' he returned to his own quarters.

This was the second occasion on which the army had tried conclusions with their master. At the Hyphasis he had given way, but this time they had to bow to his will. For two days Alexander refused to see anyone, and on the third morning he sent for several Persian nobles and gave them the title of 'Kinsmen,' a title which carried with it the privilege

## THE LAST YEAR

of greeting him with a kiss. This was too much even for the stubborn Macedonians, and they acknowledged defeat. Crowding before his door they threw down their arms and cried aloud for pardon. Alexander heard their shouts and when he came forward and saw his soldiers weeping, he also burst into tears. A veteran officer stepped from the ranks and said humbly, 'You have made the Persians your kinsmen.' But Alexander replied, 'I make you all my kinsmen,' and allowed the old soldier to kiss him there and then.

Thus the mutiny came to a happy end; and to mark the significance of his action Alexander gave a feast of reconciliation at Opis, a counterpart to the marriage feast of Susa. Tables were spread for nine thousand, the Macedonians sitting nearest to the king, and below them the Persians and the guests from other nations. It was a religious ceremony as well as a banquet, the arrangements being carried out by Greek soothsayers and Persian magi, working as friendly experts together. The guests assembled, and when the moment came for the solemn libation to be offered, Alexander put into words the dearest wish of his heart. 'I pray the gods,' he said, 'to send upon us every blessing; but above all things to give us a union of hearts and a commonwealth where Macedonians and Persians shall stand side by side.' From Opis ten thousand veterans were sent home, with three months pay and a gratuity of £250 each; and the army proceeded on its way to Ecbatana, where, for some months Alexander remained, busy preparing plans for an Arabian expedition. He had overcome all opposition

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

and with his new army he was ready for fresh adventures. But before he set out again upon the path of danger he engaged in a series of revels, held in honour of Dionysus the god-hero whom, with Achilles and Heracles, he regarded as the exemplar of his own career. Atropates, satrap of the province, attended by a troop of one hundred women warriors gaily caparisoned, entertained the whole army, three thousand actors and performers of every kind were brought from Greece, and drinking party followed drinking party in the name of the god of wine. Among the Macedonians it was a point of honour to drink deep, and as the result of excessive potations Hephæstion fell ill. In spite of his doctor's advice he attempted to cure himself by draining the contents of a huge bowl of iced liquor : his fever rapidly grew worse ; and in a few hours he was dead.

Alexander had a genius for command, but he also had a genius for friendship. Upon Hephæstion he had lavished all his affection, from him and from him alone he was always sure of sympathy ; and the loss of his beloved plunged him into an even deeper grief than that which the death of Cleitus had caused : For one whole day and night he lay clasping the corpse in his arms, and for two days more he refused to take either food or drink. When at last the violence of his grief abated he sent messengers to Ammon to ask whether Hephæstion should be worshipped as a god or a hero, and on receiving the answer that the honours due to a hero might be paid, he ordered that a monument of unexampled magnificence should

## THE LAST YEAR

be erected in Babylon at the cost of over two million pounds.

The period of mourning lasted for some time, and it was not until the early part of 323 that Alexander left Ecbatana and returned to Babylon. On his way thither a deputation of Chaldeans met him and warned him not to enter the city ; or if he must enter, at least to approach from the western side. The king suspected a personal motive behind this, for the priests had not restored the temple of Marduk as he had ordered : but he went so far as to make a detour on the west. The flooded marshes, however, were an obstacle and eventually it was by the eastern gate that he entered.

Arrived at Babylon he tried to forget his sorrow in an endless round of work. His life that spring was one of feverish activity, for embassies from east and west were awaiting him, and countless plans for the future were fermenting in his brain. On one day he would receive the Greek envoys who were still anxious to argue the vexed question of the exiles and the reparation payments due to them. On another he would interview the Arabian delegates and enquire of them if they were willing to join Alexander to the two gods they worshipped and thus make a divine trinity. From Africa there were Libyans and swarthy Ethiopians come to do him homage ; and with them hook-nosed Carthaginians, eager to discover whether the conqueror of the east was intending to add the western Mediterranean to his empire. Whether the Romans also approached is perhaps doubtful ; but

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

there were certainly envoys from the Bruttians and Lucanians in South Italy who had been fighting against Alexander the Molossian, his brother-in-law, and also from the Etruscans north of the Tiber whose pirate fleets were at this time a constant menace to the Greek cities. The western world, however, lay beyond his immediate scope for there were many problems of eastern geography that were still waiting to be solved. One of these was whether the Caspian was an inland sea, as Aristotle thought, or a gulf of outer Ocean, as the early Ionians believed. Accordingly, orders were given to Heraclides to build a fleet on its southern shore and sail northwards until the question was settled. The shape and position of Arabia was another even more important matter which required investigation. Since the return from India two or three adventurers had made tentative attempts southwards, but they had not got very far, and it was still uncertain whether it was possible to sail round, and so establish a sea route from the Euphrates to the Nile.

This task was of such importance that Alexander decided to undertake it in person. A great harbour was constructed at Babylon to receive and refit Nearchus' ships, which had sailed up from the Persian Gulf, and a second fleet was built in Phœnicia, the vessels being brought overland in sections to Thapsacus, and there put together for the voyage down stream to Babylon. The army also was increased in numbers, and once again reorganized. Peucestas had brought in twenty thousand trained Persians from his satrapy, and there were considerable reinforcements of Mace-

## THE LAST YEAR

donian cavalry. But on this occasion, instead of merely strengthening old units by adding fresh men, Alexander adopted the method of combining different arms in one formation, a method which the Romans afterwards used with such success. He kept the phalanx, but each section of sixteen men under a Macedonian corporal was now composed of four Macedonians armed with their long spear and twelve Persians armed either with bows or with javelins.

All through April and May the new fleet and the new army were being equipped for the circumnavigation of Arabia ; and then, just as everything was ready, 'came the blind Fury with the abhorred shears and slit the thinspun life.' For ten years Alexander had been forcing his physical and mental powers beyond the limit of mortal endurance, and nature at length claimed the penalty. The last twelve months had been a period of excessive strain ; for the revels in Carmania had been followed by the discovery of Harpalus' guilt, and that by the celebration of the marriage feast at Susa : then had come the revolt of the Macedonians at Opis, and finally the crushing blow of Hephæstion's death. Even superhuman strength was not proof against such vicissitudes as these, and in the spring of 323 Alexander was sorely in need of rest. But rest was a thing which he seldom allowed himself, and the end of his labours was approaching. The marsh land round Babylon is in spring the home of malaria, and a mosquito did to his weakened frame what all the warriors of Asia had been unable to accomplish.



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

The seventh of June had been fixed for his departure from Babylon and nothing remained but the last ceremonial banquets before the fleet set out. On the second of June a great feast was given to the army, at which Alexander, although he was already slightly feverish, presided. After dinner the Thessalian Medias begged him to honour a drinking party which he was giving, and that revel lasted through the night. The next day Alexander was worse, but in the evening he again sat long over the wine conversing with his officers. He then slept for a few hours and awoke in a high fever ; but he still insisted on offering the daily sacrifice to the gods and arranged some final details of the expedition. The next day his condition had become serious, and he had himself carried to a cool garden-house across the Euphrates. The change, however, brought no relief ; he was now scarcely able to speak ; and after three days he was conveyed back to the palace at Babylon.

Of the last scenes during the twelfth and thirteenth of June Arrian gives an account which in its simplicity is more affecting than any rhetoric could be. After describing the first stages of the malady the historian proceeds thus : ‘ Such is the account given in the royal gazette. We are told furthermore, that the soldiers yearned to set eyes upon him, some that they might see him while he was still alive, others because the news was getting about already that he was no more and they suspected, I imagine, that his death was being concealed by the body-guard : but most of them were moved by grief and a yearning for their

## THE LAST YEAR

king to force their way into his presence. They tell us that Alexander lay speechless as the army defiled before his bed, but that he greeted individual soldiers, lifting up his head with difficulty and making signs to them with his eyes. The royal gazette also says that Peithon and Attalus and Demophon and Peucestas passed the night in the temple of Serapis, and that Cleomenes and Menidas and Seleucus also asked the god if it would be better for Alexander to be brought into the god's shrine and as a suppliant to receive treatment at his hands; and that a voice came from the sanctuary—"Bring him not to my temple; it will be better for him to stay where he is." The Companions brought back this message and soon afterwards Alexander died, that indeed being then the better thing for him. The accounts given by Aristobulus and by Ptolemy closely coincide with this. And they also record the fact that the Companions asked him to whom he was leaving his kingdom and that he replied, "To the strongest." Others add that he also said, "I see that there will be a great funeral contest over my body."'

When he speaks of the temple of Serapis, Arrian seems to be following Ptolemy too closely, for the god Serapis was Ptolemy's own creation and was not worshipped at Babylon in Alexander's time. The temple was probably that of Bel-Marduk; but in other respects the plain account bears all the signs of truth. The body lay for several days giving out the peculiar fragrance which had marked Alexander in his lifetime, and was then embalmed for burial,

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

the army being anxious that it should rest in Macedonian soil. For more than a year, however, it remained in Babylon ; and then Ptolemy, who had meanwhile secured Egypt for himself, spread a report that Alexander had wished to be buried in the Ammon oasis. Therefore, when the funeral procession left Babylon late in 322, it took the road to Egypt instead of to Macedonia, and the body after being buried first at Memphis was finally removed to the great Mausoleum at Alexandria facing the Museum. For five hundred years it was a place of pilgrimage, and it was not until the beginning of the third century of our era that it was allowed to fall into ruins and give Clement an opportunity of moralizing upon the transience of human glory.





HEAD OF ALEXANDER

## CHAPTER XV

### ALEXANDER'S WORK

THERE were many rulers before Alexander who established great empires and extended their dominion over wide lands, and there were many after his time. Thothmes in Egypt, Sennacherib in Assyria, and Darius I in Persia preceded him : Charles the Great in Germany, Charles the Fifth in Spain, and Louis the Fourteenth in France followed in later ages. There were many generals also who may compare with him in military skill ; Epaminondas, Hannibal and Cæsar in ancient history, Gustavus Adolphus, Marlborough and Napoleon in modern days. But no one of his predecessors had the wish, and no one of his successors had the power to give, as he gave, a superior civilization to those whom they conquered : no one endeavoured, as he endeavoured, to weld all the peoples of his empire into one harmonious nation. Alexander's military exploits have already been described ; this chapter will be concerned with his work as a colonizer and founder of new cities, as a seeker after knowledge and spreader of Greek culture, and above all as an apostle of world peace.

In the eighth and seventh centuries B.C., when the Greeks were in the first flush of youthful vigour,

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

colonizing was the order of the day. Miletus alone was responsible for a long chain of settlements on the Black Sea ; and on the shores of Southern Italy and Sicily many colonies were planted which soon in splendour and material prosperity equalled or even surpassed their metropolis. Then the process began to slacken, and by the middle of the fifth century came practically to an end ; for after that time for nearly a hundred years the Hellenic states were so busy with their monkey quarrels that they had neither the surplus energy nor the surplus population needed for expansion overseas. With Alexander, however, the creation of new Greek cities begins again ; and in this, as in many ways, he not only revived the glories of the past but also breathed fresh vigour into the men of his own day. A treatise which appears in Plutarch's *Moralia* tells us that Alexander was responsible for seventy new foundations ; and although the figure has been doubted, Droysen in his exhaustive survey has shewn that probably it is not far from the truth.

Of these seventy the most famous, of course, is the Alexandria in Egypt, which under the Ptolemies became the centre of Levantine trade and the chief city of the Mediterranean world until the rise of Rome robbed her of primacy. Even then Alexandria held indisputably the second place, and during the first three centuries of our era the long lists of her scientists, her men of letters, and her theologians, Christian and Jewish, witness to the continued vigour of her intellectual as well as her commercial life.

## ALEXANDER'S WORK

Signally was the omen fulfilled, given on the city's first day, when the soldiers marking out the street lines with flour found themselves beset by flocks of birds, and were assured by the prophet Aristander that the birds were but a symbol of the ships which would soon be flocking to the port.

There were already some Greek settlements in Egypt, the largest at Naucratis and a smaller one in Memphis ; but both of these were in the interior of the Delta some way off the sea. Alexandria has the advantage of lying west of the westernmost arm of the Nile, and so its harbour, sheltered by the island of Pharos from the prevalent west wind, escapes the silt from the river which is carried by the sea current to the east and tends to block up all the harbours down the coast. Another point in its favour is the close proximity of Lake Mareotis, a safe inner haven, from which drinking water can be obtained. A Greek architect, Deinocrates, was responsible for the planning of the streets, which followed the rectangular fashion introduced by Hippodamus of Miletus in the fifth century, and into the new city were incorporated the mercantile town of Canopus and the fishing village of Rhacotis. From the first it is plain that Alexander intended his foundation to be a trade centre for the Mediterranean, which should take the place of Tyre which he had destroyed ; and fortunately both for him and them he found ready to his hand another Semitic people, the Jews, who proved to be superior even to the Tyrians in commercial skill. Alexandria accordingly was founded as a triple community of Greeks, Egyptians,



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

and Jews ; and it was this mixture of nationalities which gave it its particular character.

When Alexandria had been founded and its constitution established, Alexander's next task was to organize a system of government for the whole country ; and here the method which he adopted has a special interest, for it was closely followed three centuries later by Augustus and under it Egypt became the keystone of Roman imperial finance. Instead of appointing a satrap as the Persians had done, Alexander preferred in Egypt to decentralize. It is true that the whole financial administration was put into the hands of one man, Cleomenes of Naucratis, to whom the taxes raised locally in each district were paid in : but both the civil government and the military command were divided among several persons, Greeks and Egyptians in the first case, Macedonians in the second. In this there were two advantages : firstly, a firm hold was obtained on the revenues of the country while the actual collection of the taxes was left to native authorities and the importance of Egypt as a treasury filler was emphasized ; secondly, the division of civil and military command rendered it difficult for any one person to gain control of the whole administration and then attempt to set up an independent kingdom, a danger to which Egypt by its position and resources was especially liable.

Alexandria was a great creation, but the chain of colonies which Alexander founded in Central Asia and India is perhaps an even more wonderful feat. The Egyptian city stood in a country familiar to the

## ALEXANDER'S WORK

Greeks and was on the shore of the Mediterranean ; the far eastern settlements were in lands utterly unknown, thousands of miles from home ; and they were only rendered possible by the immense influence which Alexander exercised over his men. In them we see the noblest side of the great ruler's character, his determination not only to conquer but also to bring the blessings of civilization to those whom he had defeated. It is impossible here to give more than a very brief summary ; and for convenience these colonies may be divided into two groups, the first group consisting of those founded in Eastern Iran and the north-western mountains of India, the second comprising those in India itself, in the Punjab and Scind.

When Alexander went east in pursuit of Bessus after the murder of Darius, he was marching into the unknown, through country which was then, and is now, one of the wildest districts on the world's surface. Historians have usually concentrated their attention on the military details of his Iranian campaigns, but the certainty with which he found his way in a strange land, and the skill with which he placed his colonies in positions that both secured his conquests and also commanded the chief trade routes are proofs of genius as remarkable as any of the battles which he won. Of many of the cities which he founded in Areia, Sogdiana, and Bactria, all trace has now been lost ; but Strabo speaks of eight in Bactria alone, and Diodorus tells us that twenty-three thousand veterans after Alexander's death took the opportunity

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

to return home from these districts. But even so enough Greeks remained, as the history of the Bactrian kingdom shows, to keep Hellenic culture alive here for many generations.

Of the colonies whose position is certain the first is Alexandria Ariana in the Herat valley, founded in 330 at a point of vital importance for strategic and commercial purposes. Thence Alexander marched south into Drangiana, where at Phrada he placed the new settlement which he called Prophthasia 'Anticipation.' Coming northwards again in the spring of 329 he founded Alexandria of the Arachosians, the modern Kandahar, and Alexandria in the Caucasus<sup>1</sup> at the head of the Kabul valley. Next followed his great march through Bokhara and Samarcand to the river Jaxartes (Syr Darya), on whose banks he built the most distant of all his cities, Alexandria Eschate, chiefly perhaps to hold the Scythian nomads in check, but also possibly with the view of establishing eventually a trade route to the Caspian Sea. On his return he reorganized the constitution of Alexandria in the Caucasus, making it the capital of the Paropamisus satrapy;<sup>2</sup> and then marched down the Kabul valley into India.

Of the Indian settlements the first two were Nicæa and Bucephala on the river Hydaspes, established soon

<sup>1</sup> It was a common belief among the Greeks that the Hindu Kush was a continuation of the Caucasus, and that Prometheus had been here enchained.

<sup>2</sup> This Alexandria remained a flourishing city for some centuries, and in the *Mahawanso*, written about 150 B.C., it is called 'the capital of the Iaones,' i.e. the Greeks.

## ALEXANDER'S WORK

after the battle against Porus. Then came an Alexandria on the upper Acesines, colonized by Greek mercenaries and native Indians. Another Alexandria was placed at the confluence of the Acesines and the Indus, supplied with docks and shipyards and garrisoned by Thracians, which was to be the seat of government for the North Indian satrapy under Philippos. Alexandria Sogdiana, further down the river, commanding the road to the Bolan Pass, was again an important trading post, as was also the colony planted on the site of Musicanus' capital, now the ruined city of Alor. Finally, at Pattala on the Indus delta a fortified city, which Pliny calls Xylenopolis, was built to be the capital of the Lower Indian satrapy and the headquarters of the Indus fleet.

The purpose for which these cities were built on the great river is obvious. Connected with each other by water each one was to be a trading and cultural centre from which Greek commerce and Greek civilization should radiate over the whole country. The success of the plan depended partly upon the discovery of a sea route between the Indus and the Euphrates; but when that was secured there can be little doubt that if Alexander had lived a serious attempt would have been made to hellenize India. Whether the attempt would have been successful we cannot tell, and some think that long before Alexander's arrival the Indian character was irrevocably fixed, and that even then it would have been true to say that 'East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet.' But, as it happened, the attempt was never

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

made. The Seleucid kings who took over Alexander's eastern conquests were compelled to let the Indian satrapies go, and Chandragupta formed all the north of India into one great native empire. Still, it may fairly be said that Chandragupta himself was inspired by Alexander, and that the union of India under the Mauryas, the union of China under the first Han dynasty, and the spread of Buddhism in both countries may all be traced to Alexander's influence. Certainly Greek art penetrated into India and China much more widely than is sometimes supposed, as may be seen in the statues of Buddha in many of the Indian temple sculptures and in the beautiful coins issued by the Bactrian kings in the second century B.C.<sup>1</sup>

So much for Alexander as a colonizer: we may now turn to his work as explorer and organizer of scientific research. It would be a great mistake to think of his army as being like the forces that Marlborough commanded in Flanders and Wellington in Spain, forces to whom fighting was the one aim of existence: he was the leader not only of an army but also of an exploring expedition, such as we now send to the Polar regions, whose object was to enlarge the bounds of human knowledge. Attached to his headquarters were scientific investigators of many kinds, most of them trained in Aristotle's methods, eager not to destroy life but to observe life, not to collect booty but to collect facts. There were the

<sup>1</sup> Many of these Bactrian kings are curiously British in appearance. Antimachus is a typical Scotch laird, Eucratidas a young English officer.

## ALEXANDER'S WORK

botanists from whom Theophrastus obtained the information about the Indian trees, the banyan, the jujube, the banana, and the mango, which he gives in his *Enquiry*, adding the remark that Alexander forbade his men to eat the mango fruit because of its griping qualities. There were the zoologists who observed the superior character of the Himalayan cattle, and noticing crocodiles in both the Indus and the Nile drew the erroneous conclusion that the two rivers were connected. There were the mining experts who discovered a well of petroleum on the banks of the Oxus and examined the rich salt mines near the Beas, and with them metallurgists who introduced into India improved methods of smelting gold and silver.

There was also with the army a corps of surveyors, 'bematistæ' 'steppers,' whose business it was to measure distances and fix the exact length of marches. The three chief surveyors were Diognetus, Bæton, and Philonides; and the roads which they measured became afterwards great traffic routes. Diognetus, for example, surveyed the road from the Caspian Gates through Herat, Phrada, Kandahar and Kabul, proceeding thence across the Indus and the Hydaspes to the Beas, where the army halted. Bæton similarly surveyed the northern road from the Caspian Gates through Bactria to the Jaxartes, ascertained that the Oxus was navigable, and offered facilities for trade between India and the Caspian, and sent out preliminary exploration parties among the valleys of the Himalayas. Others surveyed the roads from Thapsacus,

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

eastwards to Ecbatana and southwards to the Persian Gulf, from Susa eastwards to Carmania, and from Amisus on the Black Sea southwards to Nisibis. Particulars of distances, stages, and the physical features of the country through which the roads passed were carefully collated, and a volume recording the result of all these observations was apparently published by a writer named Amyntas some time in the third century B.C.

It will be seen that with Alexander there began the practice of science in our sense of the word, an organized pursuit of practical knowledge directed to the service of the state and fostered by state support and patronage. It is sometimes said that Ptolemy I of Egypt, when he established the Museum and Library at Alexandria, derived the idea from Demetrius of Phalerum and the philosophical schools of Athens ; but as a matter of fact he was only following the precedent which Alexander had set, and the tame chickens of Ptolemy's hencoop were but the milder counterparts of the scientists who followed the Macedonian to the Beas and shared in the dangers of his campaigns. Alexander and his men broke the ground and sowed the seed, and it was from their efforts that sprang the rich harvest of results in applied science which was garnered during the third century B.C. by Archimedes, Eratosthenes, Aristarchus, Herophilus, and the many other laborious workers of the Alexandrian age.

Of equal importance with his encouragement of science was the impetus which Alexander by precept

## ALEXANDER'S WORK

and example gave to exploration and to the advance of geographical knowledge. Like the great navigators of modern times he opened up a new world for the Greeks and immensely enlarged both their mental and their physical horizon. Up to his day the only part of the globe with which the Hellenic cities were really acquainted was the Mediterranean and the lands adjacent to its shores: all that lay outside the ring circle was not merely unknown but in common opinion scarcely worthy of knowledge. A Greek geographer of the fifth century B.C., for example, had but the vaguest notions of central Asia and central Africa. His idea of the inhabited world, 'Oikoumene,' was that it extended from the Pillars of Heracles at Gibraltar on the west to the mountains of North-West India on the east, its length from west to east being considerably greater than its breadth from north to south. He believed that any traveller who reached the western or the eastern extremity would come upon Ocean, the great stream which flowed round the world in a circular course but had certain gulfs communicating with it, such as the Caspian Sea to the north and the Indian Ocean on the south. As regards this last point, however, there was a difference of opinion, and some thought that both the Caspian and the Indian Ocean were inland seas.

Alexander was fully alive to the necessity of exact knowledge on all these questions. When he was in Egypt he sent an expedition southwards to the Soudan, as he had promised Aristotle he would do, to investigate the problem of the Nile's sources and the reasons



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

for its summer inundation ; and on the report which he received he was able to declare as a fact that the rise in the river's level is caused by the summer rains in the mountains of Abyssinia. As regards the Caspian Sea he commissioned Heraclides to build ships at its southern extremity, and with them to sail due north until he came either to its northern end or to the place where it joined Ocean. Aristotle believed that the Caspian was surrounded by land, but Alexander himself inclined to the gulf hypothesis, and hoped that Heraclides would discover a sea route whereby it would be possible to sail from central Asia round the northern shores of Europe into the Mediterranean. This project, however, like the circumnavigation of Arabia, was interrupted by his death ; and the gulf idea, adopted by the great geographer Eratosthenes, held its own for many centuries.

The third problem, that of the place of Ocean in the east, was one of the chief reasons for Alexander's march to the river Beas ; and although he never reached the goal which he had marked out for himself, he was able to disprove the false belief that Ocean lay close to the Hindu Kush, and also to gain some idea of the real size of the sub-continent and of the many different peoples who lived within its borders. The information thus acquired was consigned to writing by Onesicritus and Nearchus, and was afterwards extended and amplified by Megasthenes, who in the reign of Seleucus I was sent as envoy to the court of King Chandragupta, and published his *Indica* on his return, so that in the two centuries before the

## ALEXANDER'S WORK

birth of Christ many people had a fuller knowledge of Indian life than the majority of our folk, in spite of their imperial obligations, possess to-day. On the other hand, even the best-informed of travellers at that time were deplorably ignorant of our own country, and the geographer Strabo, writing in the reign of Augustus, while he gives a whole book to a vivid account of India, dismisses Great Britain in a few pages, 'a land so foggy that the sun only appears for three hours in the middle of the day'; and of Ireland knows nothing except that 'Ierne is a large island inhabited by a savage people. They eat their dead fathers and have intercourse with their mothers and sisters.'

But when all is said, Alexander is greater than his work. In an age of growing incredulity he sincerely believed in the old Greek gods, Zeus, Poseidon, Athena and the rest; and believing in them he felt himself possessed of some of their divine power. Whether he actually thought himself to be a god, and whether this was the reason of his reckless courage are questions that cannot be answered; but before we dismiss the idea as absurd we should be able to say what it is that makes a god, and whether it is possible for a god to die. In any case, Alexander achieved such immortality as seldom falls to the lot of man. His mausoleum at Alexandria containing his embalmed body, set in the square before the Museum where the two main streets crossed, was a place of pilgrimage for all the world, and to it many of the Roman emperors from the time of Augustus to that of Severus, came

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

to offer sacrifice and homage. His idealized portrait on the coins of many of his successors kept his features familiar to men, and in Egypt, Syria, Macedonia and Rome he was worshipped as the divine genius of Hellenistic civilization. To the real facts of his life a host of legends, marvels, and moralities were added, and the *Alexander Romance*, fathered on Callisthenes, which in its present Greek form may be dated sometime in the third century of our era was probably the most popular book of the ancient world. From Greek it was translated into Latin, Syriac, Ethiopic, Arabic, Hebrew, Samaritan, Armenian and Persian, while from the Latin version new translations were made into early English, French, German, Italian, and Scandinavian, this last reaching even to Iceland.

Nor was his posthumous glory confined to books. Islam enrolled him among her prophets, and in the Koran he appears as Iskander Dhulkarnain, 'he with the two horns'; the Parsees still solemnly curse him as the destroyer of their sacred books in the conflagration at Persepolis; and in central Asia, the scene of his greatest exploits, his fame has never been allowed to die. When Marco Polo, towards the end of the thirteenth century, was travelling in Turkestan he found that Alexander was a name of might—'Badashan is a province inhabited by people who worship Mahommet and have a peculiar language. All those of the royal blood are descended from King Alexander and the daughter of King Darius who was Lord of the vast Empire of Persia. And all these kings call themselves in the Saracen tongue Zulcarnain ;

## ALEXANDER'S WORK

and they say that their breed of horses is descended from Bucephalas.'<sup>1</sup> Even to-day that tradition persists in Badashan ; at Marghelan they show the red silk banner which Alexander carried ; and when a few years ago the Turks were driving back the Greeks, in every Asiatic bazaar the gossips rejoiced to think that their own people were at last putting up a good fight against the Macedonian.

In his own day Alexander's divinity was recognized by some and denied by others. But the Olympians were quickly losing ground, and after Alexander's death most thinking men abandoned the old creed, and either accepted such abstract divinities as Fortune and Fate, or else took refuge in a system of moral conduct and became Stoics, Sceptics, Cynics, or Epicureans. To these philosophers Alexander was something of a stumbling-block and cause of offence, and they were apt to declare that he was only a rash young tyrant whose success was due to luck, so that Arrian thought it well to address to them a special rebuke at the end of his *Anabasis* : ' Let the man who speaks evil of Alexander not merely bring forward those passages of Alexander's life which were really evil, but let him collect and review all the actions of Alexander, and then let him thoroughly consider first who and what manner of man he himself is, and what has been his own career ; and then let him consider who and what manner of man Alexander was, and to what an eminence of human grandeur he arrived. Let him consider that Alexander was a king, and

<sup>1</sup> Marco Polo, *Travels*, Bk. I. Ch. xxix.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

the undisputed lord of the two continents ; and that his name is renowned throughout the whole earth. Let the evil-speaker against Alexander bear all this in mind, and then let him reflect on his own insignificance, the pettiness of his own circumstances and affairs, and the blunders that he makes about these, paltry and trifling as they are. Let him then ask himself whether he is a fit person to censure and revile such a man as Alexander. I believe that there was in his time no nation of men, no city, nay, no single individual, to whom Alexander's name had not become a familiar word. I myself hold that it was not without divine intervention that such a man, who was like no ordinary mortal, was born into the world.'

And as Alexander himself was greater than anything that he did, so his dreams were greater than anything that he achieved : and his dreams at long last were partly fulfilled. To his own generation his death was an event which staggered belief. When the news came to Athens the orator Demades cried : 'Impossible ! If Alexander were dead the whole world would be reeking of his corpse.' But the impossible had happened, and for the next thirty years everything was in a turmoil. Battles followed upon battles, thousands after thousands of men were slain, while his generals contended one against the other for the mastery ; and in the struggle his ideal of a world empire was hopelessly shattered. At last from the confusion three strong kingdoms emerged, Macedonia, Egypt and Syria, whose rulers during the third century B.C.

## ALEXANDER'S WORK

endeavoured, however imperfectly, to carry on his work of civilization. Macedonia under the Antigonids remained much as Philip had left it, a strong military state controlling the Greek cities and thoroughly efficient within its own limits. Egypt under the Ptolemies became the centre of world trade, literature, and science, concentrating especially on sea power. Syria under the Seleucids continued the task of colonization in Asia and spread Greek culture and the Greek language throughout the nearer East.

Then there arose a little cloud in the West, a cloud called Rome, which spread and spread until it covered the whole sky. Macedonia felt the might of the Roman broad sword at Cynoscephalæ in 197 and again at Pydna in 168 : Syria was compelled to acknowledge defeat at Magnesia in 190 : and when Carthage and Corinth were both destroyed in 146 Rome became mistress of the Mediterranean world. Victory, however, did not bring peace, for the Romans, having finished with the other nations, began to cut one another's throat, and the next century was distracted by their civil wars. Macedonia and Greece fell into decay, Syria was left to stew in its own juice, Egypt alone retained something of its former prosperity. At last Pharsalia and Philippi, both battles fought on Greek soil, brought the bloodshed to an end, and Octavian then found himself faced by Cleopatra, a woman as ambitious and, within her own limits, as capable as Alexander.

The battle of Actium in 31 B.C. decided the issue against the last of the Ptolemies, and Octavian, under

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

his new name of Augustus, was left to carry on the work of world peace which Alexander by his premature death had been compelled to lay down. In personal character the two men were very different, for Augustus was the embodiment of common sense, cautious, diplomatic, ready to use the help of others, and greatly influenced by the women of his household. But, fortunately for the world, when as a youth he was studying with Agrippa in Greece he had chosen Alexander as his exemplar, even as Alexander had chosen Achilles. So when he got control of the government he placed Alexander's effigy upon the imperial signet, paid to him divine honours, and from the worship of his Genius developed the worship of the Genius of Rome. Neither in physique nor in beauty was Augustus at all equal to his hero, but he did his best to create a resemblance by using the small tricks of behaviour which Alexander had affected, the knitting of the brows and the inclination of the head to the left shoulder.

These last details may seem insignificant, but they are valuable as showing the influence which Alexander had upon the organizer of the Roman Empire. Of much greater importance is the fact that Augustus, knowing himself to be no military genius, preferred to emulate the Macedonian as a peace maker rather than as a world conqueror. Alexander had dreamed of a system under which Macedonians, Greeks, and Persians should work harmoniously together and give the benefit of orderly government to all the nations. Augustus was able to put that dream at least partly

## ALEXANDER'S WORK

into effect, and to the Mediterranean countries he gave for two centuries the blessings of universal peace, *Pax Romana*. There were weaknesses in the system for it was based on compromise, the creation of a timid mind following on the lines laid down by one of the boldest of men; but it might have lasted longer if it had not been vitiated by one cardinal error. Towards the end of Augustus' life Roman troops operating in Germany were defeated by Arminius in the Teutoburgian Wood, A.D. 9, and the old emperor then determined that Græco-Roman civilization should be confined to fixed limits. The line of the three rivers, the Rhine, the Danube, and the Euphrates, was taken as the boundary; and the nations of northern Europe and central Asia were left to their own devices. Inside the ring fence was peace and prosperity which gradually led to a weakening of military strength; outside was a rising tide of barbarism; and the result we know.

But during the first and second centuries of our era all went well. Rome ceased to be the oppressor and became instead the protector of the Mediterranean world and Alexander's ideal for a time was realized. The Greek sophist Ælius Aristides writing about A.D. 175 gives us a picture of conditions in his day:<sup>1</sup>

‘Now the whole world keeps holiday and laying aside its ancient dress of steel has turned in freedom to adornment and all delights. The cities have abandoned their old quarrels, and are occupied by a single rivalry, each ambitious to be most pleasant and beautiful. Everywhere

<sup>1</sup> Aristides, *Panegyric of Rome* (tr. R. W. Livingstone).



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

are playgrounds, fountains, arcades, temples, workshops, schools. To use a metaphor from medicine, the world, sick from creation, has recovered its health. Gifts never cease flowing from you. One cannot find one place more richly endowed than another, for your beneficence is equally shown to all. Cities are ablaze with brightness and beauty, and all the earth is adorned like a king's garden. The beacon fires of friendship rise on her plains, and those of war are gone as though a wind had blown them beyond land and sea: in their place has come every beautiful spectacle and an endless number of games. . . . To-day Greek or foreigner may travel freely where he will, with full or empty hands, as though he was passing from homeland to homeland. The Cilician Gates have no terrors for him, nor the narrow sandy passes through Arabia to Egypt, nor difficult mountains nor inhospitable savage tribes nor rivers broad beyond measuring. To be safe, it is enough to be a Roman, or rather a subject of yours. You have made into a reality the saying of Homer that earth belongs to all, for you have meted out the whole world, bridled rivers with many a bridge, cut mountains into carriage roads, filled the deserts with outposts, and civilized all things with settled discipline and life.'

But although Aristides did not know it, the Roman Empire, ceasing to expand, had already begun to decline. Of the twelve Cæsars whose lives were written by Suetonius only the first three were men of real ability, and it is not until we come to Trajan (A.D. 98-117) that we find an emperor who was also a great general. Trajan, like Augustus, was a fervent admirer of Alexander, and his expeditions on the Danube and the Euphrates were planned in accordance with true world policy. When he entered Babylon in A.D. 116 he visited the palace where Alexander had died, and

## ALEXANDER'S WORK

seeing merchantmen setting off down the river for India regretted that he could not go with them and again add the far East to his empire. Both he and Rome, however, were too old for fresh adventures ; and the military anarchy of the third century A.D. destroyed what remained of vigour. Still, even in that troubled age Alexander was not forgotten. The sinister tyrant Caracalla (A.D. 211-217) imagined that he was his reincarnation, and set up effigies of the great king in every town of the empire, many of them composite figures portraying Caracalla and Alexander in one statue. In public he usually wore the Macedonian broad hat and riding-boots, and was attended by a troop of young nobles, his ' phalanx,' to whom he gave the names of Alexander's bodyguard. All this, of course, was folly ; but the famous edict published in his reign whereby every one was made a citizen of Rome, even if its real purpose was financial, was doubtless recommended to him by his advisers as an act worthy of the new Alexander.

The division of the Roman Empire into East and West, with Constantinople as the seat of government, was a check to unity as decisive as Alexander's death had been. Since that time the world has been divided into nations thinking only of themselves and competing one against the other : we see how Greek civilization was ruined by the mutual jealousy of the city states and yet we are unable to take warning. Charles the Great, when he established the Holy Roman Empire, made a gallant attempt in the right direction : the French Revolution, when it proclaimed

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, paid lip service to the idea : the Catholic Church has always cherished the project of a universal faith. But the world is still waiting for some one of Alexander's stature who shall put into effect his dream of the brotherhood of man.

## INDEX

- ACESINES, 206  
 Achæans, 6  
 Achilles, 3, 4, 79  
 Ada, 86  
 Ægæ, 52  
 Agis, 97, 100  
 Ahura-mazda, 73, 110  
 Alcibiades, 3  
 Alexander I, 16  
 Alexander the Lyncestian, 54, 89  
 Alexander the Molossian, 51  
 Alexandretta, 102  
 Alexandria in Arachosia, 173, 246  
 Alexandria in Areia, 172, 246  
 Alexandria ad Caucasum, 195, 246  
 Alexandria Eschate, 175, 246  
 Alexandria in Egypt, 242-244  
 Alexandropolis, 46  
 Amanus, 95  
 Ammon, 4, 112-119, 208  
 Amphipolis, 17  
 Amyntas I, 15  
 Amyntas II, 17  
 Amyntas, son of Perdiccas, 54  
 Amyntas, satrap of Bactria, 144, 225  
 Anaxarchus, 70, 179  
 Antigonus, 69  
 Antipater, 28, 54, 67, 100  
 Aornos, 197  
 Apama, 227  
 Apelles, 101  
 Apis, 111  
 Arabia, 237  
 Arbela, 121-135  
 Archelaus, 17  
 Areia, 171  
 Argeads, 14  
 Ariobarzanes, 146  
 Aristander, 79, 207  
 Aristides, 259  
 Aristophanes, 114  
 Aristotle, 2, 43-45, 248, 251  
 Arrhidæus, Philip, 51  
 Arrian, 62, 99, 116, 128, 239, 255  
 Artabazus, 157  
 Artaxerxes III, 76, 109  
 Attalus, 50, 55  
 Augustus, 244, 258-259  
 BABYLON, 139-142, 234-240  
 Bactra, 173, 179  
 Bactria, 171, 248  
 Bæton, 249  
 Bailan Pass, 94  
 Batis, 105  
 Bel-Marduk, 140  
 Bematistæ, 249  
 Barsine, 101  
 Bessus, 129, 157, 172-174  
 Bolan Pass, 247  
 Brahmans, 161, 212  
 Browne, 115  
 Bucephalas, 42, 128, 205  
 Buddha, 248  
 Byblus, 102  
 Byzantium, 35  
 CABIRI, 38, 208  
 Calanus, 228  
 i Callisthenes, 70, 113, 185-187

# ALEXANDER THE GREAT

- Cambyses, 74, 109  
 Caracalla, 261  
 Carmania, 222  
 Carthaginians, 235  
 Caspian Gates, 156  
 Caspian Sea, 6, 252  
 Celænæ, 87  
 Chæronea, 48  
 Chalcidice, 7  
 Chandragupta, 208, 248, 252  
 Charles the Great, 1, 3  
 Chenab, 206  
 Chorienes, 181  
 Cilician Gates, 92  
 Cleitarchus, 118, 152  
 Cleitus, 70, 82, 130, 176-179  
 Clement, 240  
 Cleopatra of Egypt, 38, 257  
 Cleopatra, wife of Philip, 50, 55  
 Climax, 87  
 Cœnus, 168, 179, 207  
 Craterus, 145, 168, 203, 218, 228  
 Ctesias, 192  
 Cunaxa, 124  
 Curtius, 135  
 Cyrene, 113  
 Cyropolis, 175  
 Cyrus, 73, 137, 148, 190
- ДАИÆ, 193  
 Damascus, 100  
 Darius I, 74, 137, 151, 190  
 Darius Codomannus, 77-159  
 Delphi, 117  
 Demades the Macedonian, 70  
 Demades of Athens, 256  
 Demaratus, 51, 151  
 Demetrius, 250  
 Demosthenes, 10, 30, 47, 58, 64, 229  
 Didyma, 118  
 Diodorus, 245  
 Diogenes, 60
- Diognetus, 249  
 Dionysus, 3, 4, 12, 66, 179, 196, 234  
 Dodona, 117  
 Dorians, 6  
 Droysen, 242  
 Dryden, 54
- ECBATANA, 155, 233  
 Egypt, 5, 257  
 Elatea, 47  
 Epaminondas, 3, 21-23  
 Ephesus, 83  
 Eratosthenes, 252  
 Erbil, 124  
 Erythræ, 118  
 Etruscans, 236  
 Eumenes, 70  
 Euripides, 13, 17  
 Eurydice, 18
- GAZA in Syria, 105  
 Gaza in Sogdiana, 174  
 Gedrosia, 215  
 Getæ, 62  
 Gordium, 87  
 Granicus, 80-82  
 Gulashkird, 219
- HALIACMON, 7  
 Halicarnassus, 86  
 Hamadan, 124  
 Harmozia, 221  
 Harpalus, 70, 156, 224  
 Hecate, 36  
 Hecatompylos, 138  
 Hegesias, 107  
 Hephæstion, 68, 167, 185, 225, 234  
 Heracles, 3, 4, 11, 197, 208  
 Heraclides, 252  
 Herbert, 153  
 Hermolaus, 187  
 Herodotus, 15, 138, 191

# INDEX

Hindu Kush, 173, 189, 195  
 Hingol river, 215  
 Holdich, 216  
 Hydaspes (Jhelum), 201  
 Hyphasis (Beas), 206

ICHTHYOPHAGI, 215  
 Illyrians, 25, 34, 63  
 India, 189-214  
 Indian elephants, 123  
 Iran, 171-188  
 Iskander, 254  
 Isocrates, 56-57  
 Ispahan, 155  
 Issus, 95-98

JAXARTES, 174  
 Jews, 243  
 Jonah Pass, 96  
 Julius Cæsar, 1

LAYARD, 125  
 League of Corinth, 55-57, 66  
 Leonidas, 41  
 Leonnatus, 210, 215  
 Leuctra, 23  
 Limnus, 165  
 Lucretius, 123  
 Lyncestians, 8, 18, 19  
 Lysimachus, 69

MACRAN, 215  
 Magi, 148  
 Malloi, 209-211  
 Maracanda, 174, 177  
 Marco Polo, 218, 254  
 Mareotis, 243  
 Marshall, 199  
 Massagetæ, 179  
 Mazæus, 125-142  
 Megalopolis, 100  
 Megasthenes, 252  
 Memnon, 76, 80, 89

Memphis, 110  
 Mentor, 76  
 Midas, 15, 88  
 Mieza, 43  
 Miletus, 85, 242  
 Mosul, 124  
 Musicanus, 212  
 Myriandrus, 94

NAPOLEON, 1, 3, 208  
 Naucratis, 243  
 Nautaka, 179  
 Nearchus, 70, 193, 209, 214, 219-222  
 Nectanebo, 109  
 Nestus, 7  
 Nicæa, 205  
 Nicanor, 130  
 Nineveh, 125  
 Nosala, 221  
 Nysa, 196

ODRYSIANS, 130  
 Olympias, 4, 14, 38, 50, 67, 119, 163  
 Olynthus, 31  
 Omar, 149  
 Onesicritus, 200, 221  
 Ophir, 138  
 Opis, 231-233  
 Oxus, 173  
 Oxyartes, 180

PANGÆUS, 25  
 Parætonium, 114  
 Parmenio, 28, 67, 81, 85, 96, 113, 128, 134, 156, 164-169  
 Pasargadæ, 149  
 Pattala, 212  
 Pauravas, 201  
 Peithon, 212  
 Pella, 21  
 Pelopidas, 21

# ALEXANDER THE GREAT

- Pelusium, 108  
 Perdiccas I, 14  
 Perdiccas II, 17  
 Perdiccas III, 19  
 Pericles, 3  
 Perinthus, 35  
 Persepolis, 148-154  
 Persian Gates, 146  
 Peucestas, 210, 225  
 Pharnabazus, 91, 100  
 Philip of Macedon, 4, 20-52  
 Philip the Acarnanian, 93  
 Philip, satrap of India, 210  
 Philippi, 26  
 Philippopolis, 34  
 Philotas, 68, 164-169  
 Phocis, 32  
 Phrada, 172  
 Pinarus, 95  
 Pliny, 101, 247  
 Plutarch, 101, 128, 152, 163, 222, 242  
 Porus, 201-205  
 Poura, 218  
 Prophthasia, 172  
 Pseudo-Callisthenes, 109, 254  
 Ptolemy, 51, 69, 114, 196, 198, 240, 250  
  
 RAVI, 206  
 Rhagæ, 156  
 Roxana, 183, 226  
  
 SACÆ, 122  
 Sacred War, 30  
 Salmous, 218  
 Salonica, 8  
 Sardis, 83  
 Sasigupta, 194  
 Satibarzanes, 172  
 Scylax, 191  
 Seleucid kings, 248, 257  
 Seleucus, 69, 227  
  
 Semiramis, 139, 190  
 Serapis, 239  
 Shipka Pass, 61  
 Sidon, 102  
 Simmias, 133  
 Siwah, 115  
 Sogdiana, 171, 183  
 Sogdian Rock, 180  
 Soloi, 93  
 Spitamenes, 174-176  
 Stateira, wife of Darius, 98  
 Stateira, daughter of Darius, 226  
 Stein, 197, 204  
 Strabo, 148, 200, 216, 245, 253  
 Sumer, 6  
 Susa, 143, 226  
 Sykes, 149  
  
 TALOI MOUNTAINS, 215  
 Tarsus, 93  
 Taxila, 199  
 Taxiles, 195  
 Tempe, 58  
 Thapsacus, 125  
 Thebes, 21-24, 65-67  
 Theopompus, 32  
 Theophrastus, 249  
 Thucydides, 171  
 Tigris, 126  
 Trajan, 260  
 Triballi, 60-62  
 Tyre, 102-104  
  
 UXIANS, 145  
  
 WORDSWORTH, 78  
  
 XENOPHON, 125  
 Xerxes, 141, 152, 191  
 Xylenopolis, 247  
  
 ZAB, 124  
 Zadracarta, 161  
 Zoroaster, 73, 171







